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RUTH AND ROSE
A STORY FOR
SCHOOL-GIRLS.





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RUTH AND ROSE;

A STORY FOR SCHOOL-GIRLS.

By E. R.



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RUTH AND ROSE;

A STORY FOR SCHOOLGIRLS.

Chapter I.

GOOD FRIDAY.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

IT was the afternoon of Good Friday, and the heavy gloom which pervaded the atmosphere seemed in keeping with the sad associations of the day.

In the drawing-room of a pleasant country residence a lady of refined and gentle appearance was sitting at tea, with her two step-daughters, Ruth and Rose—the elder, a delicate, thoughtful-looking girl of fifteen; the younger, a pretty, self-willed child of ten.

On the present occasion the face of the latter wore an expression of pouting discontent, which presently found its vent in words, for she exclaimed, in a petulant manner, "Well, I must say, Mamma, I am thoroughly tired of *this*

Good Friday. Nothing but church and religion all day. When I lived with nurse Brooks we always made it a day of pleasure, and either went out to watch the holiday folks, or had a party of people at home."

A look of pain passed over the quiet features of Mrs. Elliott, but before she could commence a reply, the little girl—who had discovered her pet kitten rubbing its nose against the outside of the French window—had flown out of the room, with her accustomed impetuosity, to call it in at the garden door. As she disappeared, Ruth turned to Mrs. Elliott, and said, in a voice of mingled grief and indignation, "Oh, Mamma, what a heartless child Rose is ; what will you say to her when she comes back ?"

"I really think, Ruth, that at present, the less said the better. Rose has not been under the best religious influence, and, though kindly treated and well taken care of by her fond old nurse, I fear she has been led to consider anything connected with religion as dull and disagreeable. We must hope for a better impression to be produced on her mind. She has a sweet, affectionate disposition ; she is not *heartless*, dear Ruth, but *thoughtless*, and we must make it our constant prayer and study so to live, that our example may lead her to the love of better things."

After Mrs. Elliott ceased speaking, there was a long pause ; they were both wrapped in thought, on many subjects, and while they are so engaged, we will sketch for our readers the circumstances connected with this interesting little family.

Mr. Elliott, the husband and father (who was at this time absent from home), had been much attached,

in early life, to his present wife; but she, though sincerely reciprocating his affection, had thought it her duty, as a Christian, decidedly to abandon all idea of marriage with a person of such infidel principles as Mr. Elliott then professed. He soon met with a young lady, of opinions similar to his own, who consented to become his wife, and with her he started for India, where he was to hold an important civil post. The heat of the climate materially affected the health of the youthful Mrs. Elliott, and so incapacitated her for the care of the two children who were born to her, that when Rose was but a year old, and Ruth about six, their father decided on sending them to England, trusting, that by so doing, their constitutions would acquire some degree of English vigour. In the case of Rose his expectations were fulfilled, and she grew up a merry, hearty girl, under the fond care of nurse Brooks; but Ruth seemed always to retain the delicacy of her early childhood, and was a source of great anxiety to the two maiden aunts, to whose care she had been confided on her reaching England. These ladies were truly devoted to their charge, and laboured earnestly for her mental benefit, procuring for her advantage, excellent masters in every branch of study, but refraining from sending her to school, lest a want of home care should increase the delicacy of her constitution. The religion of the heart, however, her aunts lacked, and though sincerely attentive to all they deemed necessary as religious duties, they were yet entire strangers to that peace which passeth understanding; and from them the aspirations of Ruth's gentle heart received many a check, for they thought it only right to do their utmost to

prevent their beloved niece becoming what they would have termed an enthusiast. No wonder, then, that she grew up prematurely grave and subdued, with ever an unsatisfied longing in her heart.

Two years previous to the commencement of our story, Mrs. Elliott had become so much worse, that her husband had sent her to England, hoping everything from a return to her native air, and intending to follow her immediately on the conclusion or some important public business, which then detained him in India. Accompanied by a faithful attendant, she reached England, and by the advice of a London physician, repaired at once to a sea-side town on the south coast, where she remained in great quiet, having been strongly recommended to avoid the excitement of meeting her children, until she had somewhat recovered from the fatigues of the voyage. Struck by the gentle melancholy of her wan features, as she was drawn along the parade, she became an object of great interest to a lady visiting at the same place, and who, on discovering that she had no friends at the time with her, sought her acquaintance from truly kind and Christian motives. Mrs. Elliott's was not the first heart that has been unlocked by sympathy, and she soon began to look upon the daily visits of her friend as her chief source of pleasure, while to Miss Grey they had become doubly interesting, since she had discovered that this invalid lady was no other than the wife of her former lover, of whom she had heard nothing for several years. Finding, that in spite of the best medical care and good nursing, Mrs. Elliott was daily growing worse, and seeing that nothing human could avert her approaching

death, Miss Grey came and took up her abode with her, devoting her whole time and energies to her personal comfort, and striving especially to induce her to seek for a loving Saviour's pardon, and His help in the hour of death. For some weeks her efforts seemed unavailing; for the poor lady, who had clung with the tenacity of a feeble understanding to the stronger intellect of her husband, appeared totally unable to realize that any belief, which he had not, was necessary.

One morning, as Miss Grey entered her room, she was surprised to see her looking flushed and agitated, the tears rolling down her cheek, and her trembling hand grasping a letter, which had just arrived by the Indian mail. But who shall describe her joy when she learnt the reason of her friend's agitation? "I address you as a changed man," wrote the husband to his wife. "Since you left Calcutta, I have discovered the folly and sin of my past life. You know it is now many years since I entered a church, and indeed should never have thought of entering one now, but that in my official capacity I was obliged to be present at a service held in the cathedral here. On that occasion, I could not help feeling touched by the solemnity of the worship; and when the good Bishop, Dr. Wilson, ascended the pulpit, I was prepared to listen calmly to what he had to say. With a fervour and earnestness characteristic of himself, he announced his text from the 1st Epistle of John, 4th chapter, 10th verse: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." Then he went on, in a way which I cannot describe—though the impression his words made will never leave me—to show how none but a perfect

and Almighty love could have reached the misery of a world, not only without love, but actually at enmity with Him. Again, he appealed to us to know, whether aught but this love, which was stronger than death, which no waters could quench, whether aught but this could have vanquished the hearts of men, harder than the nether mill stone. As I listened, the pride of philosophy melted away ; I lost all confidence in the specious arguments, which have so long been my boast, and as I left the cathedral, I cannot better explain my feelings, than by describing my heart, as indeed a chamber, empty-swept, and garnished. For two days, I shut myself up with the once despised Bible, and at every page I read, was more and more convinced of the truth and goodness of its author. Still I felt that to me belonged that dreadful sentence: "Those, My enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before Me." On the third day I begged an interview with Dr. Wilson, and found him full of Christian kindness. He comforted my stricken heart with many Divine assurances of pardon, dwelling most on those which had brought peace to his own heart, when he, as a young man, had had great conflicts of mind. In conclusion, I can only say, that so full of gratitude I feel, that my great and longing desire is that my wife should participate in my great happiness. For this I pray day and night.

With such expressions the letter closed, and the thankfulness of the writer, we may feel assured, found a ready echo in the heart of his old friend. As for the dying wife, the prayers of the husband were all fulfilled ; before her dim eye closed in death, it had learnt to light up with

pleasure at the name of Jesus, and His was the last name breathed in the ears of her children, who were summoned to see their almost stranger mother, before she left them for a better world.

In the course of the year Mr. Elliott arrived in England, and the reader will not feel surprised after what we have related, that his suit should have been renewed, and that Miss Grey, who retained her old affection for him, should have consented to become his wife, and, as such, a mother to the two dear girls, in whom she already felt so great an interest. They had just settled down in a pleasant country home, about twenty miles from London, at the time our story opens ; and to Ruth, the arrangement had been one of entire happiness, for her step-mother had encouraged her longings for a better life, and had led her to rejoice at the foot of the Cross.

A few weeks after the time at which our story commenced, as Mrs. Elliott and Ruth were one morning sitting quietly together at work, Rose ran into the room, and exclaimed, in an angry voice, "Mamma, I hate the little Benson's. I will never play with them again."

"Dear Rose, you forget how wrong it is to hate anyone. Do calm yourself, and then tell me what it is the little Benson's have done that is so very dreadful?"

"Why, Mamma, they are cruel children ; I should think they had no affection at all. I am sure even *you* will hate them, when I tell you all about it. When I went to their house this morning, I was quite surprised to find them both at play. They told me they had a holiday, because this day two years their eldest brother was drowned, and

their sister, who teaches them, loved him so dearly, that she felt too sad to give them their lessons as usual to-day."

"But now, Rose," said Mrs. Elliott, as the excited child paused for breath, "Now you have not told me what they did to displease you so much?"

"Why, Mamma, it was their heartlessness that made me so angry ; for you know *they* were the cause of their brother's death. They were playing alone in the park that morning, for their nurse had gone out for a holiday, and they presently thought they would go down to the lake, though they knew well enough it was quite against the laws to go there by themselves. When they saw the boat, they thought what a fine opportunity it was of having a row by themselves, and they unfastened it from the post and jumped in. The wind carried them quickly towards the middle of the lake, and you may think how frightened they were to see the boat filling with water. All at once, they remembered to have heard the gardener say that it leaked, and must not be used again till it had been thoroughly repaired. Then they cried and screamed at the top of their voices, and just as the boat was sinking, their brother heard them, and came running from the other side of the lake to their rescue. He plunged into the water ; but he was not a good swimmer, and when he had managed to drag both the girls to the shore, all his strength was gone, and he died in about half-an-hour. So you see, Mamma, he died in saving their lives ; and I cannot think how they can bear to be so merry to-day, for they were the cause of his death, and it was all owing to their disobedience."

"Indeed, Rose, I quite agree with you, that it is very

strange these little girls can be so full of gaiety on a day which I should have thought would have filled them with grief. But while you are blaming *them*, Rose dear, can you think of no one else who acts very much like them?"

"No, I cannot, indeed, Mamma; for I never remember hearing any other story like this, and I am quite sure if I had, I should never have forgotten it."

"Do not be *too* positive, dear. We often read of a story very much like this, and, though it happened more than 1800 years ago, you and I are greatly concerned in it, for we all belong to the disobedient sinners, who had brought themselves in danger of everlasting death."

"Oh, Mamma, I see it all now," exclaimed Rose, her bright eyes filling with tears. "Yes, we are the disobedient children, and Jesus is our Elder Brother. How could I be so wicked last Good Friday, as to wish to be at play all day, and never think of Him who suffered so much for me. I am blaming the little Benson's, and I am all the time more ungrateful myself."

"I am truly glad, dear Rose, you see your fault, and that the events of to-day have given you a better understanding of our Saviour's great love to us. You remember He Himself said that no man could show greater love, than to lay down his life for his friends; what, then, must have been Christ's own love, since He laid down His life for His *enemies*?"

The above conversation had a very beneficial effect on the mind and heart of Rose, and confirmed Mrs. Elliott in her previous opinion, that love would prove the great master-key, which would unlock the sensibilities of the little girl's warm heart.

Chapter II.

GOING TO SCHOOL.

"Oh, Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

IT had been the great wish of the former Mrs. Elliott that her children should be sent to boarding-school, and, indeed, she had left instructions that they should be confided to the care of a Mrs. Morris, a widow lady residing in a healthy suburb of London. Various circumstances had arisen which had hitherto prevented this plan from being put in execution ; but now all obstacles appeared removed, and it was settled that Ruth and Rose should enter on their new life, when the pupils re-assembled after the approaching Midsummer holidays.

To their affectionate step-mother, the prospect of parting with the girls was a great trial ; but she knew that it was really for their advantage, and felt sure that they would be happy under the motherly care of kind Mrs. Morris.

For some weeks previous, the bustle of preparation was going on, and Rose was in a constant flutter of delight at the many new things which were being provided for their comfort and enjoyment, while away from home. Mr. Elliott

took them to London for the day, and allowed them to make choice of many articles for their use and amusement. They were each supplied with a pretty little writing-desk, well stocked with the necessary materials, so that there might be no excuse for failing to send home those frequent letters, which would be looked for there with so much pleasure and affection. Ruth selected many interesting books to take with her, for not only was she fond of reading herself, but her kind disposition prompted her to remember that she might also give pleasure by lending them to her young companions. The last purchase made was that of a very handsome baby doll, which Mrs. Elliott had promised to dress for Rose in the most approved style, and the possession of which seemed to the little girl so delightful, that she felt quite impatient to get to school, that she might display her treasure to her new friends there. Indeed, *her* anticipations were all agreeable; everything, to her eye, seemed *couleur de rose*, and she ran from one member of the household to another, declaring that she was the happiest girl in the world. Poor Ruth was far from sharing the brightness of her little sister's anticipations, for her's was a timid, retiring disposition, and she really felt a dread of taking up her abode with so many strangers. Mrs. Elliott did all in her power to help her to overcome this feeling, reminding her that in more busy scenes she might be able to do more for the cause of the Saviour she loved so much, than she could possibly expect in the comparative seclusion of home. She especially urged her to allow her young companions at once to see that she was resolved to serve the Lord Christ, "for that," she

added, "will save much misunderstanding, and may prevent your being afterwards solicited to join in anything doubtful, when it is known whose soldier and servant you are. You well know, dear Ruth, the mighty power that exists in the force of example; and while I hope you will endeavour to show a truly Christian example to all around you, let it be particularly your aim in all that concerns Rose. Though sisters, you have seen but little of each other as yet, and it lies in your power to exert a very good influence over Rose, and perhaps keep her out of many little troubles into which her volatile temper would lead her. You know now for yourself, dear child, how to provide for all events, by putting on the whole armour of God; and you must try not to be faint-hearted, but every day solace yourself with that encouraging promise, 'He giveth *more* grace.'"

With many such kind and hopeful conversations did Mrs. Elliott seek to strengthen the mind of the gentle girl, who, on her part, exerted herself to the utmost to look on the bright side of things, and to prepare for her new duties in that spirit of cheerfulness, which she well knew would best please those who loved her so tenderly, and were so anxious for her welfare.

The day previous to their departure was, however, a trying one to get through, and Rose was the only one in the house who seemed to retain her usual spirits. Ruth bore up bravely till she came to bid her Papa "good-night;" and even then, though her voice faltered, she did not lose her self-command, but spoke so cheerfully to him, that he failed to notice the effort with which it was done. Mrs. Elliott, however, observed it all, and as Ruth bent to

kiss her, whispered soothingly in her ear, "I will choose your verse for you to-night, dear, the 14th chapter of Exodus, 33rd verse. When Ruth reached her room, she turned at once to her Bible, and read with glad earnestness those words which have so often proved the comfort and hope of God's people: "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." With thoughts full of this sufficient promise, Ruth laid down to rest, and was before long in a sound and peaceful sleep.

The public clocks were just striking five the following afternoon, as Mr. Elliott and his daughters came in sight of Manor House, and turning laughingly to the younger, he said, "So this is the spot of ground to which I am to transplant my little Rose. I hope she will send forth plenty of sweet blossoms to all around her, and that her companions will never suffer from any thorns."

"Now, Papa, it really is very naughty of you to tease me about the thorns again. I told you the other day, I had pulled them all out, and meant to be an exception to the rule—a rose without thorns."

They were shewn into the drawing-room, and received a kindly greeting from Mrs. Morris. With her, Mr. Elliott had a short conversation, respecting his wishes in their general course of study; and then kissing the girls affectionately, he bade them "good-bye," and left the house.

They were shown by Mrs. Morris where to lay aside their things, after which she took them at once to the dining-room, where tea was about to be served. Here they were introduced to the head teacher, Miss Smith, who having spoken kindly to them, led them to their appointed places

at the tables. Of these there were two, both running across the room; the one intended for the elder, the other for the younger pupils of the establishment. For Mrs. Morris preferred to have girls of various ages under her roof, thinking that if a number of great girls were left to themselves, they were more apt to become selfish, and devoted entirely to their own immediate pursuits; whereas, living among younger ones, there was always a scope for their help and kindness to be shown. This feeling, Mrs. Morris did all in her power to foster, often soliciting help for some little pupil, in the practice of a difficult piece of music, or the composition of a theme, from those older and more advanced in such studies. Some of the elder pupils also volunteered to take charge of the wardrobes of the little ones, thus helping them to keep their clothes in order, and repairing for them what was beyond their power to manage. All this Mrs. Morris felt was preparing them for the future, either as mothers, or in any other way guardians of the young; and was one way in which she tried to inculcate on her pupils' minds and hearts, that a selfish existence is really no *life* at all, for that no man *liveth* to himself.

As soon as Ruth was seated at the tea-table, she took a timid glance at the young ladies already there, wondering which of them would prove most agreeable as friends, and trying to read their characters in their faces. For this she had ample opportunity, for she took no part in the conversation, as they were principally engaged in exchanging information with each other and Miss Smith, as to their various engagements during the past holidays. Presently, one of them enquired of the latter, whether she knew if

Miss Wain would be well enough to return to her duties this half.

"She is expected the day after to-morrow," replied Miss Smith. "I am glad to say she is reported quite well again, and has been staying in the country for the last few weeks. I do not know what we should do without her, and as to the little ones, I fancy they could never reconcile themselves to another teacher."

Glancing round towards the other table, Ruth was amused to see how soon Rose had made friends with her little companions there. She was enlarging on the glories of her beautiful Pauline (as she had named the doll), and was promising to display it when her box was unpacked in the evening.

After tea, the girls all adjourned for a stroll in the garden, and were soon broken up into little groups of quiet talkers; for those accustomed to boarding-school well know, that for the first few days after re-assembling, the conversation is carried on in very subdued tones, and that no complaint has to be made of unreasonable noise.

At eight o'clock the bell rang for prayers, after which the younger pupils retired to rest, and the elder ones were at liberty to remain another hour, before separating for the night. Feeling the time hanging heavily and unoccupied, one of them proposed a game, in which each had to state what she considered the definition of happiness. Ruth was invited to join, and when the turns had gone languidly round, the question was proposed to her. Now, she felt, was the opportunity for following out Mrs. Elliott's advice, and for letting her companions see what was the bent of her

life. She hesitated for a moment, lifting up her heart meanwhile in secret prayer for strength, and then, when her next neighbour turned to her, and said, "Come, Miss Elliott, let us hear *your* definition of happiness?" she looked up with a sweet smile, and answered gravely, "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The young ladies looked surprised, and one of them (certainly not distinguished for politeness), whispered to another, "What an odd girl!" Has Mrs. Morris introduced her here as a sort of home missionary?"

After this, no attempt was made to resume the game, and feeling rather tired of such a tedious evening, they separated by mutual consent, and all repaired to their rooms.



Chapter III.

MISS WAIN.

*"Who hath the Father and the Son,
May be left, but not alone."*

THE next day was devoted to sorting books and arranging drawers, for as yet the regular hours of school discipline had not been resumed.

In the afternoon, several more of the pupils made their appearance, and in one of them Ruth at once felt a great interest. This was Lucy Wright, a plain but sweet-tempered looking girl, so short, that though in reality about fourteen, she yet looked considerably younger. An hour or two after her arrival, while busily engaged in arranging her school box, she had kindly run to the assistance of Rose, who had caught her frock in some bushes in the garden and torn a long slit; and when this had been repaired for her by her new friend, the grateful little girl ran to tell her sister of Miss Wright's kindness, and assured Ruth that she loved her already, and would do anything to help her. When they met at tea, Ruth in her quiet way thanked the

new-comer for the assistance she had given Rose, and they at once fell into a friendly chat, exchanging confidences respecting their families and homes; and Ruth was glad of such an opportunity for making many inquiries about the various hours of study and recreation, the masters that taught in the establishment, &c. She was particularly pleased on going up to bed that evening to find that Miss Wright was one who would sleep in the same room; and when Ruth had opened her Bible and read from it a verse or two, as was her usual custom, she was gratified by a request from her new friend, that she would lend her the book for the same purpose. "I am so glad to see you read the Bible," she said, "for I think I shall not be afraid to do so now I have some one to keep me in countenance; but all last half-year I was really ashamed to be seen reading it at night, as some of the girls made fun of me, and others said I only wanted to appear better than my companions."

"But surely," said Ruth, "it would have been better to complain to Mrs. Morris, and so had a stop put to such tormenting behaviour."

"Ah! that shows at once you are a new girl, or you would not talk of making complaints to Mrs. Morris, that is, for any little matter. The girls would lead you a fine life if you told tales; and though Mrs. Morris is a very good person, she does not like to interfere more than she can help amongst us, and always advises those who wish to lead a Christian life, to try and be at peace with all, and win other people by the meekness of their behaviour, and the kindness of their conduct."

The next morning passed much as the previous one had

done, and several more of the pupils returned in the course of the day. In the afternoon, as Ruth was coming out of the drawing-room, where she had been taking a first music lesson of her new master, she saw a young lady, apparently about twenty, having just entered the house, proceed upstairs to remove her bonnet and cloak. When Ruth returned to the schoolroom, she was beset by all sorts of questions with regard to the last arrival, for some one had seen a cab drive up, and all were anxious to know who had come. "Was it a tall young lady?" asked one. "Was she dressed in deep mourning?" inquired a second. "Has she gone up to the first floor?" chimed in a third; and so on, till Ruth, having satisfied them as far as she could, they came to the unanimous conclusion that it must certainly be Miss Wain.

This impression was presently verified, for on going into the dining-room to tea, they found Miss Wain herself, standing near the door, waiting to speak to all as they entered. At once there was quite a shout of delight, and all gathered round the young teacher, with such kissing and embracing, that she was fain to cry out for mercy, and beg that she might be allowed to take breath. Before taking her place at the table, she went round to speak to the strangers, and Ruth and Rose were both surprised and pleased, when, having asked their names, she bent down and kissed them kindly.

Ruth took an early opportunity of enquiring of her friend, Lucy Wright, what made Miss Wain such a particular favourite with all the girls, and for whom she wore such deep mourning?

"She has lost her only brother," was Lucy Wright's reply.

"He was a surgeon in the country, and she lived with him, as both her parents were dead. I believe he was a very clever young man, and very attentive to his patients, for he was knocked up from hard work, after a time of great sickness, and died of rapid consumption six months ago. You had better never ask Miss Wain anything about him, for she can scarcely bear the mention of his name, without shedding tears, she loved him so dearly. Of course, too, she has lost her home, and is now qualifying herself for a governess. She teaches some of the little ones, and takes lessons of the masters. She was not very accomplished when she came, for she had always lived in the country, and her great ambition was to be a good housekeeper to her brother."

"Well, thank you for this account of her. I am sure I shall like her; she came and kissed me so kindly, though I am a perfect stranger. She is very interesting-looking, too, though certainly not pretty, and I like the way in which she braids her hair; it is simple and ladylike. But what has she done to make herself such a favourite?"

"Oh, she is very kind and pleasant to the great girls, and quite a mother to the little ones. She goes and tucks them up at night, and often sits down on one of the beds, and tells them stories. But, Miss Elliott, I know it will please you to hear that she is very religious. Some of the girls think her too strict; I don't know about that myself. I should like to be as good as she is, but I do not think I should like giving up so much time to please other people, as she does."

Our readers will feel assured that after this conversation

Ruth became very desirous of enjoying Miss Wain's friendship, and that she resolved to help her, if possible, in some of her benevolent plans for the pleasure of the younger pupils.

It was, therefore, greatly to her surprise when, on the following morning, Rose came to her in the library, where she was busy preparing some French exercises, and began complaining of Miss Wain's conduct to her. "She has given me back my lesson to study, though I said it quite perfectly. It was the one out of 'Child's Guide,' and you know, Ruth, you heard me say it all right last night. I don't call it fair, and I think Miss Wain is very disagreeable. Jane Drake says she is very cross at music. I thought when she came yesterday I should like her, but now I have quite altered my mind. Pray do not you make friends with her, Ruth."

"Well, I must say it seems rather unjust to turn a perfect lesson," said Ruth, feeling somewhat indignant on her little sister's account. "Not that I should take any notice of what Jane Drake said, for her idleness is quite a proverb in the school, and I daresay she thinks anybody cross who corrects her for it. But wait a minute, Rose; as soon as I have finished this sentence, I will come with you to Miss Wain, and ask her to explain her conduct."

And Ruth again took up her pen, saying to herself, at the same time, that she was resolved to defend her sister from any injustice on the part of strangers.

They found the young teacher in the schoolroom, waiting while the younger pupils cleared away their slates and books, for the hour for closing the morning studies had

just arrived. Ruth went straight up to her, and began, "Excuse me, Miss Wain, but I think my sister must have misunderstood you. She tells me you desired her to study her lesson again, though she knew it perfectly."

"Perhaps, then, Miss Elliott, she was mistaken in my meaning, for I remember turning quickly away after I had spoken, to take a lesson from another little girl. I did not at all find fault with your sister for the way in which she said her lesson; indeed, I praised the correctness with which she repeated it. But she did not appear to enter into the meaning of it. These were the questions," she added, taking the book from Rose's hand, and reading aloud, "In the process of dying, must not every substance be prepared, before it receives the colour? Yes, or it would wash out; this preparation is called mordant. Alum is good for linens and cottons, and solutions from metals for silk and wool. Must the article to be dyed be dipped in this mordant first? Yes, and well dried before it is put into the colouring liquor." "So when she had concluded, I asked her (in order to ascertain if she fully grasped the subject, what she would do in the first place, if someone gave her a piece of stuff to dye. She was quite at a loss to reply, and I therefore advised her to take the book, and think the matter quietly over, as I told her that to repeat lessons merely by rote was of little use, if we did not understand their meaning."

Rose now looked a little ashamed; she felt that in her hastiness she had scarcely given Ruth a fair account of the matter, and she already felt sorry for her misrepresentations; for she was, with all her faults, an open-hearted and

truthful child; so she at once said, "Please forgive me, Miss Wain, I went to Ruth in a pet, and told her you were cross, and I know now that was not true. Just give me the book again for a minute, and I will try to understand it."

She studied the page thoughtfully for a few moments, and then answered briskly, "Now Miss Wain, I can tell you all you wish to know. I should first of all dip the stuff into a mordant, and that would prevent the colour from running."

"Quite right, dear, and now I am glad we have settled the matter so happily, for I have been hoping, Miss Rose, that you and I might be the best of friends, and I should be quite disappointed if it were otherwise."

"And so should I, dear Miss Wain, indeed I should; so pray give me a kiss and forget how silly I have been."

So saying, Rose threw her arms round her neck, gave her what she was wont to call a hug of affection, and then ran off to join her companions in the playground.

Ruth now felt that some apology was necessary on her part; "I hope you will excuse my coming to you in this way, Miss Wain. You see I felt surprised at what Rose told me, because I had heard her say the lesson last evening, in readiness for to-day."

"Don't mention it, dear Miss Elliott, I am sure it is only natural that you should be ready to stand up for your sister, especially such a dear little warm-hearted creature as she appears to be."

"But, Miss Wain," said Ruth, still lingering to talk, "don't think me impertinent, if I ask you why you think it necessary to take such extra trouble. You have so much

to occupy your time, that I should have thought you would have been glad to dismiss the children, when they had said their lessons at all near the mark."

"I feel, Miss Elliott, that I have not thoroughly done my duty, if my pupils do not entirely understand all the studies they take in hand. I have often thought that a Christian must necessarily have harder work to do than those who do not aim at such a high standard, and I was much struck with what Dr. Hamilton says on the subject, in his beautiful little book, 'A Morning by the Lake of Galilee.'" "Will you let me read you a few lines from the second chapter?" added Miss Wain, taking the book from her work-basket. "He says, 'The lot of Christ's disciples is usually a life of toil. In this there is little difference betwixt the Christian and the wordling; if anything, the difference is in the wordling's favor. The Christian is constrained to keep the King's Highway—the beaten path of industry and straightforward honesty, and cannot shorten the journey by leaping fences, or trying an occasional near-cut through his neighbour's property. His conscience is a hard task-master, and insists that every penny shall be fairly earned.' And again, a little farther on, he speaks of 'a circumspect life whose terror is sin.'"

Before many days had passed, Ruth had another opportunity for observing Miss Wain's conscientious desire to promote the moral and religious welfare of the children she taught. Having been told by one of them, that another, who was habitually untruthful, had defended herself by saying, that she did not care if she did tell falsehoods, for that plenty of other people did the same, Miss Wain took

a quiet opportunity of speaking to her, when she encountered her one morning in the library, and quite thought that they were alone; never perceiving Ruth, who sat behind the open door, writing a letter to Mrs. Elliott. "Miss Jones," said her teacher, in a grave voice, "I am glad to have this chance of speaking to you seriously on a very sad subject. Just read me this verse," she continued, taking a Testament from the table, and pointing to the 8th verse of Rev., 21st. With assumed indifference, but evident shame, the little girl read it; and then Miss Wain asked her gravely, "Do you think, my dear child, if it should by-and-bye be your sad lot to suffer the punishment of lying, which you have now just heard described in God's Own Book; do you think, I say, that under such a dreadful infliction you would find consolation from knowing that others suffered it with you? I am sure you will say that it would be no comfort at all; do not then make other people's sins an excuse for your own, and the next time you are tempted to shelter yourself behind their falsehoods, remember what it will be to share the fruits of their guilt." Miss Jones hung her head, looking considerably abashed; and before leaving the subject, we will just say, that while she remained at Manor House, Miss Wain, though narrowly on the watch, never again detected her in a falsehood, and when she left the school a few months after, it was with great hopes that she had really given up this evil habit.

In Lucy Wright, poor Ruth had sustained a great disappointment. Very little accustomed to society, and thoroughly sincere in all her own professions, she had supposed, from the circumstances of the first day they met, that her new

friend was decidedly a Christian. It was, therefore, with much regret, that on several occasions she heard Miss Wright express herself in a very careless manner on matters of importance; and at length, anxious to solve the difficulty, she hinted to her something of her surprise. "Why my dear girl," was the reply, "did you really take me for a saint, because I read my Bible at night? Well then, I must explain that that is more my mother's goodness than my own. It is done at her particular wish, and she is so good, and I love her so much, that I should not like to omit it. Last half, when the girls teased me about it, I used to keep a torn leaf of the Testament just inside my school-box, and when I went there to put away my work or books for the night, I used to lean over and read a few words. That is what I call accommodating myself to circumstances, and being all things to all men; for you see, I obeyed my parent, and yet avoided being laughed at. But how grave you look, Miss Elliott; you don't quite seem to approve of what I say."

"I should scarcely think your mamma would like to hear you talk so," replied Ruth; "surely we ought not to be ashamed of doing what is right. St. Paul never meant that."

As they had been talking thus, a slight thunder-storm had come up, and flashes of summer lightning played across the schoolroom window. A timid little girl at this moment ran up to them, and with tears in her eyes, said beseechingly to Lucy, "Oh, Miss Wright, you are always so good-natured, would you be so very kind as to go upstairs for me. I am afraid to go, because of the thunder and lightning, and

I have left my apron in my room, and if the bell should ring, I shall be scolded for not having it on."

"To be sure I will," was the good-natured reply, "only when I come down I shall certainly make game of you for being such a little goose." In two minutes she returned with the desired apron, and as she fastened it on, the little girl thanked her warmly, and added in her praise, "What a brave girl you must be, Miss Wright."

"To be sure I am," said Lucy gaily, turning round towards Ruth, who stood just where she had left her. "Why should I not be brave? My conscience is quite clear, and I have nothing to be afraid of."

Miss Wain, who had now joined the little group, looked so unaffectedly sorry at her lively rattle of words, that Lucy enquired why she looked so sad. "You must forgive me, dear, if I seem to speak harshly; but as you made your last speech, I could not help thinking that your heart must belie your words. You were owing to me the other day that as yet you had not sought peace with God; how, then, can you say there is nothing on your conscience. Surely there is, if you consider, for, by your own confession, you are constantly grieving God's Holy Spirit, and you are daily crucifying the Son of God afresh, putting him to an open shame."

"But, Miss Wain, you do not think I wish to be so bad as all this. I mean to change, for I am sure that true Christians are really the happiest; but I cannot be quite good just yet. I expect to be confirmed next year, and then I shall turn over a new leaf. Surely, there is reason in that."

"As much reason, dear Lucy, as though a person afflicted with a dangerous disease, when advised to consult a skilful physician, should reply, 'I thank you for your recommendation, and I shall certainly do as you say, but not just yet. It is true my disorder is both painful and dangerous, but then it seems scarcely worth while to be cured at present.'"

"But then, Miss Wain, you always put things in such a strong light."

"Only in the strong light of truth, Lucy. You acknowledge that to love Christ is happiness, and yet you would rather postpone being happy." And here the conversation ceased, for the tea-bell rang, and all adjourned to the dining-room.



Chapter IV.

NEW FRIENDS.

*"To teach his heart to glow with generous flame,
Caught from the deeds of men of ancient fame.
And more than all, with commendation due,
To set some living worthy in his view,
Whose fair example may at once inspire,
A wish to copy what he must admire."*

ABOUT a month from the time of their first arrival at school, the Elliott's were one day delighted to receive an unexpected visit from their mamma. After mutual enquiries and expressions of pleasure, she told them the object of her coming. "Mrs. Allett," she said, "is obliged to leave England for some time, with her husband, on account of his health, and she wishes to place the two little girls here during her absence. As she is very busy making preparations for her departure, I offered to come and make arrangements for her, with Mrs. Morris, being only too pleased to have an opportunity of looking in upon my dear girls; for under other circumstances, I should not have ventured to interrupt their studies at such an early stage of the proceedings. As it is, I have begged a half-


holiday for you both, and Mrs. Morris has consented to spare you till eight o'clock this evening, at which time your papa will be here to fetch me. So, run and get your things at once, for I propose walking over to Harley Hill to introduce you to a very dear old friend of mine."

The two girls were speedily equipped, and in less than half-an-hour, they had started out, the pleasurable feeling of an unexpected holiday being heightened by the sunny brightness of the afternoon.

Ruth had begun asking Mrs. Elliott what was the age of the little Allett's, and whether they were nice children, when Rose interrupted her laughingly, and said, "Oh you ought to come to me for a description of them, Ruth, for you know they spent a few weeks at Walton, once, while I was there. Nurse Brooks used to declare, every day, that it was worth a king's ransom to have the charge of them ; you would never guess the tricks they were up to ; things that would never have entered my head, though, before she knew them, nurse used to say, that I was the cleverest girl at mischief she ever saw. One day, they were playing by the asparagus bed, which ran quite up to the side of the house, where the rain water-butt stood, and Susie, (she is the eldest you know) took a fancy to make one of the trenches into a river, so she turned on the tap to let the water run in and fill it, and a nice mess they made, for the butt was more than half full of water."

"Whatever did nurse say to them," enquired Ruth.

"Oh, she did not find it out at first, for she and I were up in the bedroom ; but at last, she said, she began to be afraid some mischief was going on, as it was all so quiet.



Well, downstairs we went, and looked out at the garden-door, and there they were, with their afternoon frocks all bespattered with mud, sailing sticks for boats along the water."

"It was enough to make nurse feel very vexed," said Mrs. Elliott.

"Yes, mamma, it was indeed, for the next day was washing-day, and nurse had to use hard water, for all the soft was wasted; and besides, it had run down with such a rush that a large part of her nice asparagus bed was spoilt."


"I hope they are better behaved now," said Ruth, "or they will not be a pleasant acquisition to our establishment. But were they always troublesome, Rose?"

"They never seemed out of mischief. Nurse said she had heard that at home they were allowed to run wild. One day she missed her silver thimble, and nearly a week after it was found in the oat-bin. It seems nurse had given them leave to feed the rabbits, and they took it into their heads to measure out the corn very precisely, so many thimblesful to each bunny. Another day Tiny pricked holes in my beautiful bouncing ball that Ruth had sent me, and I can tell you that made me very angry. I gave Miss Tiny a good spat when I found it out."

"But I hope, Rose dear," said Mrs. Elliott, unable to help smiling at the thought of her executing such summary justice on the mischievous little offender, "I hope that now you would find a better way of managing her, if she offered to be troublesome to you. I assure you that Mrs. Allett's chief reason in sending them to Manor House

is because they will be under the same roof as my dear girls. You will remember, I know, darling, that school will be a great restraint to them, after having led such a free life, and you will do your best to make it pleasant to them. If they are tiresome and interfere with your amusements, so that you are inclined to get out of temper with them, then try to be patient by recollecting that their mother is hundreds of miles away from them, and that they have a very sick father, whom they will most likely never see again. I know, too, the little things like you, Rose, for they told me so the other day when I was at their house; and though I saw them only for a few minutes, I could not help thinking they seemed very warm-hearted, in spite of the little training they have had. If you show them kindness, Rose, and never encourage them in naughty ways, I think you will find that your example is not thrown away upon them. Ruth, I feel sure, will do all she can to win them to be more loving, and thus make themselves more beloved. Poor children, they are much to be pitied. Mrs. Allett told me that her time was so entirely taken up in nursing her husband that she could devote very little attention to their improvement, and for the last few months they have been almost exclusively with a very ignorant nurse-girl, who strengthened all their bad habits by teasing them when they were good, and laughing at them when they were naughty."

As Mrs. Elliott ceased speaking they began to ascend Harley Hill, and in another ten minutes were in sight of their destination — Wilton Lodge. It was a pleasant-looking double-fronted house, standing alone in a green



lane, which intersected the main road, a little below the summit of the hill. On the right hand of the front door was the drawing-room, with French windows opening on the lawn ; and here, enjoying the brightness of the afternoon, and the fragrance of the surrounding flowers, sat Mrs. Clayton, one of Mrs. Elliott's dearest and oldest friends. She held a book in her hand, but was not reading, for she had allowed it to fall on her lap, and was gazing out into the road, when she caught sight of her approaching visitors. With an exclamation of delighted surprise, as she recognised her friend, she rose hastily, and stepped out on the lawn to meet them. "Well, this is a pleasure I had little thought of," she exclaimed, greeting them all by turns. "I need not ask who these young ladies are, for though I have never seen them, they are already quite familiar to me, from the full and good description you have often given me of them. Do come and take off your things at once, for I am sure a cup of tea will be refreshing after climbing up the hill, and the tray has already been brought in."

So saying, she led the way upstairs and while Mrs. Elliott was taking off her bonnet, Ruth turned to the open window, and gazed with delight at the magnificent prospect before her. Down the steep descent of the hill were dotted white villas, with clustering groups of trees around them ; yonder was a river whose waters rolled placidly along ; while in the distance, out of the murky atmosphere surrounding it, rose the head and shoulders of the giant St. Paul, the rays of the descending sun lighting up the gilt cross on its dome.

"Ah, I see, dear," said her hostess, observing her rapt

admiration of the scene, "that you are doing justice to our lovely view. Walter says our house ought to be called the Eagle's Nest, for we are perched up so high on the hill, and yet are somewhat sheltered, not being quite at the summit. From this window the prospect is even more extended than that from the drawing-room below, where you saw me sitting as you came in. That is my usual seat at this time in the afternoon, for there I watch the return of my son from school. He has been since Midsummer," she added, in explanation to Mrs. Elliott, "to the City of London School, and he goes and returns by train. I was beginning to think him rather late to-day, but now I see him turning the corner of the lane, satchel in hand; he will be so pleased to see you."

Mrs. Clayton bent over Ruth's shoulder, and waited to see her darling boy enter the gate; and truly, if a little maternal pride stirred in the depths of her loving heart, it was only excusable, for even a stranger could scarcely regard him without admiration. Just turned fourteen, he was of a tall, graceful figure. Curly brown hair clustered on his fine forehead, and in his shining eyes seemed depths of manly intelligence; while around his well-shaped mouth, and over his sunburnt cheeks, there rippled a perpetual play of merry, open-hearted gaiety and fun.

"What made you so late to-day, my son?" asked Mrs. Clayton, as, greetings and introductions over, they seated themselves around the well-spread table.

"Why mater," he replied, (he had always called her mater since the proud day, when, bringing home from day-school the first word of Latin he had mastered, he had

called her exultingly by that classic appellation). "Why mater, we were late in leaving off this afternoon. When part of our work was over, all the boys were assembled in the great hall to hear Professor Clock give a lecture on chivalry. It was very fine indeed. He gave us a most glowing description of the knights errant of olden time; how brave they were in defending the weak, and punishing the wrong. I begin to wish I had lived six hundred years ago; I would have had a prancing steed to ride on, and then I would have scoured the country for miles round. No one within reach of me should have dared to ill-use a woman or oppress a little child," he added enthusiastically, tossing back his head and looking handsomer than ever.

"It must have been a very nice lecture," remarked Ruth, evidently much interested, both in the narrator and his subject.

"It was indeed, Miss Elliott, it was first-rate; but you would have laughed to hear the professor, just at the conclusion, when he was endeavouring to wind up in a practical way."

"Don't suppose," he said to us, "that there are no knights errant now-a-days, although the order has become extinct in name and primitive organization. There are still plenty of them about. I met one in the City, as I came here this afternoon. In outward appearance there was nothing to mark him as such, for he came out of Christ's Hospital, and wore the bluecoat dress; but a trivial action of his at once convinced me that he belonged to the order. As he was hurrying along, he presently overtook a poor old man and woman, who were both engaged in

endeavouring to lower a heavy basket of vegetables, which the latter bore on her head. Constantly jostled, however, by the passing crowds in the streets, they appeared quite unable to effect its descent in safety. My young friend at once perceived their predicament, and stepping briskly up to the poor old couple, raised his firm arm, and placed the basket safely for them on *terra firma*. Here, thought I, is a practical finish for my lecture to-day, and I walked on, congratulating myself on the acquisition of a new proof that knight-errantry, in effect, is far from being obsolete."

"Really, Walter," said Mrs. Elliott, "your manner of reciting this, is worthy of the professor himself. And now tell me how you like the City School, and what branches of study particularly engage your attention."

"Why, dear Mrs. Elliott," I thought you knew I meant to be a sailor. I am longing to visit foreign lands. Mater has consented to my entering the class for nautical studies, and I love reading books of voyages and travels. In our bookcase yonder, you can see I have a whole row of them, my great treasure and delight."

Thus the tea went on amid such pleasant converse; and it was nearly over, when Walter enquired of his mother, if she had seen anything of Charlie Tile, a little boy, the son of a labouring man, who came sometimes to help him work in his garden, or assist in carrying out some of his Robinson Crusoe schemes of entertainment.

"No, I have not seen him," said Mrs. Clayton, "but I was sorry to hear this morning that he had met with an accident; his father was carting stones, and one fell down against Charlie's ankle and bruised it very much. The

doctor says he must keep his bed a day or two, and I understand that his restlessness at this restraint has made him very feverish. By the way, that reminds me, I promised to send him some jelly this evening ; but I scarcely know who is to carry it, for I cannot spare cook, and Jane has gone out to see her friends."

"Then I will run down with it, mater. Here is a fitting occasion for me to commence a course of knight-errantry ; only," he added laughingly, when the cook brought the jelly ready packed up, "there is something rather ludicrous in the notion of a knight-errant running about the world with a small market-basket on his arm."

"Oh, knights are quite above regarding appearances," replied his mother, as he tossed his cap on his head, and took up the obnoxious basket.

He bounded out of the drawing-room window, and was halfway up the garden path, when, apparently struck by some new idea, he ran back again, and said, "Oh, Mrs. Elliott, do you think Miss Rose would like to go with me to see Charlie's Persian cat ? It was given to him when it was quite a small kitten, and it has long silky hair, with such odd-looking eyes."

"Oh, I should like to come very much," exclaimed Rose, answering on her own account. "I will fetch my hat and be after you in a moment."

"What a splendid fellow Walter grows," said Mrs. Elliott, as the front gate closed behind them. "Nature seems to have intended him for a noble knight. It is quite a fulfilment of the promise of his babyhood. I so well remember one day when he was staying with me, at the

time of your husband's death. He was then, as you know, scarcely three years old, and on one occasion, when I was amusing him with a book of coloured prints, I was almost alarmed at the vehemence he manifested at one picture, which represented the flogging of a negro slave. His face became crimson with anger, and he clenched his little fist, declaring in his baby language, that he would beat the cruel master very hard."

"Did he really?" said his mother, delighted at the recital of anything connected with her darling boy. "And I thought just now, when he spoke of *commencing* a course of knight errantry, that I should have said he had commenced it long ago. He has always shown kindness to the oppressed or afflicted. One day during the summer holidays he gave the last of his pocket-money for the purchase of a frog, which some boys had been tormenting. The poor little thing had one leg broken, and seemed in great pain. As soon as Walter had concluded the bargain he carried it into the shrubbery and killed it at once, as being the kindest way of putting it out of its misery. And I must tell you of one more action which pleased me very much at the time. A few weeks ago I was one afternoon hurrying home from a country ramble, to escape a shower of rain just then commencing, when I caught sight of Walter crossing the end of the lane with a white bundle in his arms. It appeared that, running home out of the rain, he had seen one of the cottager's babies lying under the hedge. The children who had had it in charge had wandered away to play, leaving it there asleep; and it would soon have been thoroughly drenched if Walter had

not happened to see it. He took it over to the brickmakers' cottages, and soon found the right home in which to deposit it. I thought I had never seen him look so handsome as he did a minute after, when he came running in, still blushing at having received the warm thanks of the little creature's mother. But really I must not run on in this way, or you will think I can only talk on one subject, and that a very self-interested one."

"No fear of that," replied her friend warmly. "I am never tired of hearing Walter's praises. And now that I have two daughters of my own," she continued, glancing affectionately towards Ruth, "I am all the better able to appreciate your maternal pride. But how surprised I was to hear your son talk of going abroad. Surely it would break your heart if he did."


"I think not," was the reply, made in the quiet, self-possessed tone of one who has made up her mind to a sacrifice. "Were I to tell him that it would be quite against my wishes, and if he then persisted in going, I almost think that would break my heart, for his conduct in that case I should regard as disobedience. Therefore, I think it wiser and kinder to lay no such restrictive commands upon him. It seems to me I should be selfish in refusing what is the dearest wish of his heart, unless I had more important reasons than my own personal gratification; and for truth and uprightness I could trust him to the ends of the earth. He is a brave and honest, and what is more than all beside, a God-fearing boy."

Meanwhile Rose and Walter had run gaily down the lane, and soon reaching their destination, they saw Mrs.

Tile standing at the door. Walter enquired after his *protégé*. "Thank you, Master Walter, he is very hot and restless. The doctor says he ought to take plenty of nourishment, but he has scarcely eaten a mouthful all day. But he will not refuse jelly sent by Mrs. Elliott, especially if he hears *you* brought it."

"Just give me a spoon, and I will go up and feed him with some myself," returned Walter, "if you will be good enough to show this young lady the Persian cat while I am gone." So saying, Walter turned towards the staircase, and was greeted with a shout of rejoicing from the upper room, on the part of Charlie, who having recognised his voice, would have sprung out of bed to meet him, had he not been detained by his poor bruised leg. "Lie down, like a good boy, Charlie, and then I will stay and feed you a bit. Your mother says you do not eat much, and you will never get well at that rate."

"Oh, Master Walter, I haven't a bit of appetite, shut up in this hot bed, with nothing to do. I feel so miserable; I flounder about, and get hotter still, wishing I could come and help to build the grotto in your garden. I fear it will all be finished before I get well again, and it was such a pretty job," said the poor little fellow beginning to cry, for pain and fever had made him weak and petulant. "Come, you must try and be brave, my man," said Walter, observing this, "and if you try hard to mind what the doctor and your mother say, I will promise to let the grotto stand still till you are well again." For though a favourite project of his own, the generous fellow was willing to lay it aside, to soothe and gratify a poor sick child. "And



Charlie," he continued, in a lower, graver tone, "when you say your prayers to-night, ask God to help you to be patient, and then you will find it much easier to bear the pain."

Walter then sat down by the bed, and Charlie unresistingly ate several spoonfuls of the jelly. "And now I must say good night," said Walter cheerfully, "for I have a lady waiting for me. To-morrow morning before I go to school I will bring you down one of my books, so that you may amuse yourself with the pictures."

When they left the cottage Walter told Rose that he would take her back another way, through the premises of a neighbour, where she should see some very tame gold fish. They made their way towards the pond for this purpose, and Rose was greatly entertained to see the fish come eagerly up to the surface for the crumbs which Walter held out to them. She tried the experiment herself, but laughed so loudly at the tickling sensation they made when they nibbled against her finger, that the shy little things darted away again under the cool water. As they turned away Rose caught sight of some fine forget-me-nots, growing on the bank of the little stream which supplied the pond, and she would have rushed after them, heedless of consequences, had not Walter held her back.

"Don't think of such a thing, Miss Rose. The bottom of the bank there is all soft mud, and you would get in such a mess."

"Oh, I am sorry," said Rose. "I could not see the mud for the plants and weeds that cover it, and I should so

have liked to get a bunch for Ruth ; they are her favourite flowers."

"You shall have them in a second," exclaimed Walter, plunging into the mud towards the desired flowers, before Rose could beg him to desist. He had soon secured a handful, and coming back, he held them out to Rose. Then glancing at his feet, whose muddy condition she was regretting, he bade her gallantly think nothing of them, "for," he said, "a true knight should never mind encountering a little dirt to do an errand for a lady."

Ruth was delighted with the flowers, and warmly thanked her sister for thinking of her.

When Walter returned from exchanging his muddy boots he found the visitors all prepared for departing, and Mrs. Elliott said she must now beg a favour of him, on behalf of three unprotected females, and request him to procure them a cab from the station.

"Now that, Mrs. Elliott," said he, "is putting my chivalrous feelings to the severest test. How can I bear to expedite the departure of my kind friends? "However," he continued, "it is of course impossible to refuse the bidding of any fair lady, and therefore (stooping forward to kiss her hand with a mock air of gallantry), I must go and execute your commission, however painful to my own feelings."

"What very nice people," said Ruth, as the cab rolled away from the door. "I like Mrs. Clayton exceedingly, and I am sure it will be a great treat to accept her invitation to go and stay with her from Saturday to Monday, some time this half. And Walter is such a kind-

hearted fellow, he has made me wish, for the first time in my life, that I had a brother."

They reached Manor House soon after eight o'clock, and found Mr. Elliott already waiting for them. He could but exchange a few hasty words with them, and then hurried off with his wife, for they had still a long distance to go, and it would be quite late before they would reach home.

At the close of the following week the little Allett's arrived. Most of the young ladies were disposed to make playthings of them, for they were considerably younger than any of the pupils, and besides, were so backward and babyish in their way of talking, as to be a constant source of entertainment to their elders. Mrs. Morris considered that Tiny, who was only five years old, was too young to be much in the schoolroom, but allowed her to take her meals with the others in the dining-room, that she might learn, from their example, to behave nicely at table. The first day, at dinner, when her plate was passed to her, she pushed it scornfully away, exclaiming, "disgusting, disgusting," and then looked round at the young ladies, evidently hoping to create attention and make them laugh. Mrs. Morris, however, having made signs of silence, no one took any notice of her, and dinner proceeded as usual. Presently, Miss Tiny became aware that she was losing her chance of the meal by being so silly, so she quietly drew the plate back in front of her, and ate the whole of its "disgusting" contents with an excellent appetite.

She seldom, after this, attempted any nonsense at the table, and in the course of a few weeks learnt to behave very well indeed. The greater part of the day she spent

in the play-ground, or in the housekeeper's room; and to the latter Miss Wain used to go for half-an-hour every morning to teach her the alphabet. Unfortunately, she and her sister had both been impressed by their ignorant nurse with the idea, that school was little better than a prison, that learning to read was a most disagreeable business, and that teachers were to be regarded as the enemies of the whole juvenile race. Tiny, therefore, having a great spirit of her own, was resolved to hold out against Miss Wain's efforts to teach her, and she gave that young lady and Mrs. Jarvis, the housekeeper, no slight trouble in their united efforts to control her. She twisted up the leaves of her book, and tore the covers off. Then she would slide under the table, and holding by one of the legs, resist for a long time all efforts to raise her to her seat. Of course, at this rate, her study of the alphabet proceeded but slowly, and though really a very quick child, she delighted in miscalling the letters; Miss Wain's time and patience were mostly exhausted when she had been induced to say a few of them. One day, she positively refused to name J when it was pointed out to her, and after many vain appeals from her patient teacher, the child asked, "Don't dou know?"

"Yes, of course, *I* know what it is."

"If dou know douself, den why do dou ask me."

"I want to see if you know it; come, don't keep me waiting any longer, there's a good girl."

"I tell dou dis time, and mind dou never ask me again."

Daily, however, Miss Wain was encouraged to find that she grew less troublesome, and seemed disposed to be more friendly towards herself, so that she hoped in time entirely

to bring her round to a more reasonable course of conduct. But though always showing her great kindness, she resolved to be firm ; and one day when Tiny had been particularly fractious and naughty, tearing off some of the paper on the walls of the housekeeper's room, Miss Wain told her she would not be allowed to join with the other little ones in a game of hide and seek, which, being a wet day, she had promised to have with them in the play-hour before tea. Tiny proudly declared she did not care, but considerably altered her tone when afternoon came, and she heard shouts of fun and laughter proceeding from the little schoolroom, which was usually the chosen spot for romps. She ran to the door, and finding the latch above her reach, kicked violently to demand admittance ; but this being refused, she had nothing left to do but sob and cry, to express her vexation and annoyance. The punishment, however, had a salutary effect ; it convinced her that Miss Wain's were by no means idle threats, and that what she said she really meant. By degrees, too, her kindness won upon her, for the child was really of an affectionate disposition, and before many weeks she had come to regard her teacher as far from being a cruel enemy, and began to take such pleasure in her lessons that she would often come to the schoolroom door and ask if it were not nearly time for Miss Wain to come to her.

Susie, who was about seven years old, was of much the same disposition as her younger sister, and it required the same amount of persevering kindness and firmness to render her somewhat tractable. She, too, however, gave in before long, and one day, when Miss Wain was giving

her a music-lesson, after plodding patiently through the first part of the little lesson she was learning, she gave a sigh of relief, and turning to her teacher, threw her arms round her neck and kissed her heartily. "I love you very much," she said, "and so we all do."

"I am *very* glad of that," replied Miss Wain, quite touched by her earnestness, and thankfully receiving this assurance that her efforts to win affection had not been in vain.

"Yes, and shall I tell you why," continued the child. "Mrs. Morris says the reason we all love you is because you love God. You do love Him, don't you?"

"Yes, dear, I hope so."

"But why do you say you *hope* you do, when you *know* you do?"

"Well, then, I will say I know I love Him." And the child, now satisfied with this, turned round again to the piano, and the lesson was diligently resumed.



Chapter V.

SUNDAY.

"A day most calm, most bright."

IT was a fresh, pleasant Sunday morning in October, and Ruth was the first to enter the quiet schoolroom. She walked to the open window, and stood for a few moments enjoying the brightness of the sky and the clearness of the air. A row of lime trees ran along the edge of the playground, upon which this window looked, and Ruth listened with a pleased ear to the chirping of some little birds in the upper branches, while now and then, as the light breeze stirred the foliage, the yellow leaves came slowly falling in their robes of golden hue to the soft grass beneath. As the clocks ceased striking eight, the bells of the neighbouring churches pealed out their early Sunday chime, one after another re-echoing the strain, till it seemed as though the grey old belfreys and slender spires, from which the sounds proceeded, had been stirred

by the thankful resolve of the Psalmist, when he said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." As the music ceased, Ruth turned from the window, and had taken up her Bible for the purpose of looking over the verses which she would presently have to repeat in class, when Rose opened the door, and exclaimed with delight, "Oh, Ruth, I am so glad to find you alone. I made haste to get down before the rest of the girls, for I wanted to ask you for some money. You know that this afternoon Mrs. Morris is going to make up the subscription for the Childrens' Hospital, and I should so like to give something, but I have not a penny left."

"But did you not get your weekly money yesterday, Rose?"

"Oh yes, I had it, of course; but then I owed more than half of it, and with the rest I bought some cakes for the little Allett's."

"But, really Rose, you ought to be more considerate. You know if I give you some money for the hospital, it will not fairly be your donation, and I do not think I ought to do it, so don't ask me any more, but run away now, for I want to look over my verses."

At this moment, three or four of the little girls entered the schoolroom, and Rose, on that account, ceased her suit for the present. Ruth, however, was much annoyed to hear her presently telling Jane Drake that she thought it was very ill-natured of her sister, and that she had no doubt she only made excuses because she did not want to part

with her money. Now a dread of being thought mean was one of Ruth's weaknesses; so she took the first opportunity of calling Rose aside, and gave the desired sixpence, feeling dissatisfied with herself at the same time, for she well knew she was only yielding to avoid being laughed at or spoken against, and that it would only help to strengthen the careless, improvident habits of her sister. Rose, however, was quite satisfied now that she had all she wanted; and changing her tone with her usual rapidity, declared that Ruth was the most generous of girls.

After morning service that day, Ruth was sitting in the library with some of the little ones, dinner being rather later than usual, for it was Communion Sunday, and those who had remained to partake had not yet returned home. She was trying to teach Susie Allett a part of a hymn, which she would be expected to repeat in the afternoon, but the child was so restless and inattentive that she made no progress with the verse.

"Now, Susie, say it slowly after me," said Ruth, beginning again for the third or fourth time:

"When the Christian child awaketh,
She will think of God in Heaven,
And softly say, 'I thank Thee, Lord,
For the sleep which Thou hast given.'"

This done, she was desired to try it by herself, but went off in her usual extraordinary way, making a complete jumble of the sense:

"When the Christian child awaketh,
She thinks of God in Heaven,
And says, 'My sleep to me is given.'"

"Now, Susie, you know that is all wrong. Do try and be more careful. Begin it once more."

Again it was commenced, but with only the same result, and poor Ruth was ready to give up in despair, when, looking round at an exclamation of surprise from some of the little ones, she saw a nurse standing at the other end of the room with a baby in her arms. This was the little sister of one of the pupils, whose mamma had sent it in for her to see. All the girls were anxious to look at the little creature, and kiss its soft cheek; and none were more eager than Susie Allett, who was enchanted to touch its tiny fingers. The baby, however, soon began to cry, and nurse was obliged to carry it off. "What a dear little thing," said Susie, coming back to her seat by Ruth. "We had a baby brother, but he died. Oh, he was such a sweet little fellow, with golden hair and blue eyes. I was so sorry to lose him."

"But you will see him again some day, Susie," said Ruth, soothingly, for the child's eyes were full of tears at the remembrance of her brother. "You know he is an angel now, in Heaven, and must look much more beautiful than when he was on earth. You know there is some pretty poetry about babies in Heaven, which says:

"I know that he is now at rest,
Where other blessed infants be,
On their Saviour's loving breast."

And Ruth, seeing that the child was pleased and comforted to hear her talk in this way, went on, until all sadness had vanished, and her little face was as cheerful as ever. But

the subject had quite subdued her, and the old restlessness and fidgetty inattention had disappeared. Seeing this, Ruth again took up the hymn book, and the little girl, trying her best, the verse was perfectly known some minutes before the dinner-bell rang.

It had long been the custom in Manor House for the junior teacher to take a class of the younger girls, on Sunday afternoons, to hear them say hymns, and to read or tell them something suitable for the day. Miss Wain was now the conductor of this class, and so agreeable had she made the way in which she carried it out, that many who had previously considered themselves above joining it, now begged to do so of their own accord. This increase of numbers had obliged Miss Wain to divide the class in two, and she usually took the younger portion first, endeavouring to make it as interesting as possible to the little ones who composed it. They each said a hymn, or a part of one, then she questioned them a little on Scripture history, and would conclude by telling them Bible stories or anecdotes from books. Of these latter, the great favourite was that one concerning the poor little chimney-sweep, who, when tempted to steal a watch, whilst left alone in a lady's room, overcame the temptation by praying to God. For this story the little ones would beg time after time.

The younger class being dismissed, the elder portion would assemble, and the same ground would be gone over, only, of course, in a style more suited to their age. On the afternoon in question Miss Wain, in concluding, was speaking of those words in Rom. 12th chap., 11th verse,

“Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” “You know,” she said, “that many people have an idea that religion is only a thing for Sunday; that we can only be religious while we are praying and reading the Bible, or hearing sermons. But now this is quite a mistake. If serving the Lord consisted entirely in such matters, then you and I must give up all hope of serving Him. To-morrow I must be teaching, you must be learning, and if religion only means church-going, then you and I have no chance of being religious. But do you think, dear girls, that Christ would give us a religion which we could not make use of every day? Far from that; we see that Christ’s religion is made to suit everybody. To serve the Lord we must try and do our daily duties the best we can. An old poet says that a servant can please God even in the sweeping of a room, if she does it according to His laws, that is, to the very best of her ability. And it is just the same with us. I daresay you remember that Mr. Rogers said a good deal to this effect in his sermon this morning, when he spoke of its being possible to feel ourselves always in the presence of Christ, both working and resting. Now, if you try to carry this out in every-day life, you will be obeying St. Paul’s directions, ‘Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.’ If to-morrow you study diligently because it is a Christian duty to do so, then you will be just as religious as you will have been to-day, while engaged at church, in praying to God, or hearing His Word. There are some of you whom I feel persuaded, indeed whom I *know*, are seeking to serve the Lord, and such of you must remember for your encouragement that you serve a Master,

unlike all others, One, who though perfect Himself, yet looks compassionately on our weakness, and is always ready to help with His Holy Spirit. You know He promised that He should come as a *Comforter* to His people, and the actual meaning of the word 'comfort,' is to make strong and brave. Therefore, when in our efforts to serve God, we meet with difficulties, we must ask for the help of the Holy Spirit, and He will make us strong and brave to do whatever is right. And then it is very pleasant to remember that after work comes rest ; the Bible assures us over and over again that those who work for Christ shall have a full reward. When, therefore, you get down-hearted in running the race He sets before you, when you find it very hard to keep your tempers gentle and your actions kind, or when you are tempted to join in anything which your conscience tells you Christ would not have you do, then remember how worthless is everything compared to pleasing Him, and how *nothing* can make up to you for grieving such a Friend. I am now going to tell you a verse which I lately met with, translated from the German, and I should like you to take it for your motto during the coming week, both as an encouragement when you are trying to do right, and also a check when you feel disposed to go wrong. I will say it slowly, that those who wish may take it down :


“ And the Master shall come smiling,
When work stops at set of sun ;
Saying, as He pays the wages,
‘ Good and faithful one, well done.’ ”

Most of the girls took a copy of the verse, promising to

keep it in mind during the week, and then Miss Wain dismissed the class.

When the elder pupils went after tea to the evening service, Ruth remained at home, for she had a slight cough, and Mrs. Morris was naturally extremely anxious about her health. It was a disappointment to Ruth to be left behind, and she lingered rather sorrowfully at the window, watching her companions pass out of the gate, two and two, on their way to church.

She soon, however, roused herself from inaction, and going into the library, found most of the little ones, who at once begged to be told a Sunday story. Gathering them round her in a convenient group, she invited Tiny Allett to come and listen also. It was the first Sunday that the little thing had been allowed to mix with the other children; she had now become more tractable, and Mrs. Morris hoped that the generally quiet behaviour of the pupils might have a beneficial effect on her conduct. However, when asked if she would like to come and listen to a story about King David, who was once only a shepherd boy, she tossed her head rudely, and declared that everything out of the Bible was dull and dry. Ruth thought it best to take no further notice, and proceeded with her history, but could not forbear smiling, when she presently observed that Tiny, who was walking up and down the room with another little girl, paused to listen each time she passed. Very soon, she altogether ceased her walk, and coming to the edge of the group, gradually pushed her way in, till, when Ruth had reached the climax of the story, and told how young David cut off the giant's head with his own sword, Miss Tiny was



standing close by her elbow. Never again was it necessary to *solicit* her attendance to hear a Bible story.

Ruth next proposed a hymn, and seating herself at the piano, played a hymn which most of them knew. The housekeeper came in with lights before it was over; and when they had finished singing, took the children away to a supper of cake and fruit, which was always prepared as a little treat on Sunday evenings.

Ruth remained behind, and spent a quiet hour alone. She was still sitting in the library when Miss Wain entered it on her return from church. "I hope you have not felt dull, dear," she said. "So I see you have been writing," she continued, glancing towards the table, "and I should much like to read your verses. Though I have not the slightest talent in that way myself, I can fully appreciate the the works of others. What has been your subject to-night?"

"I did not mean anyone to see what I had written," said Ruth, colouring shyly. "But it is a favorite amusement of mine; my taste runs in that direction, and I am sometimes tempted to waste too much time upon it. To-night I was thinking a good deal about Mr. Rogers' sermon this morning; he made everything so clear and simple, and it seemed so suitable for a Communion Sunday. How much I wished to have stayed with you and the others who remained; it must be a great happiness to do so. In the spring I am to be confirmed, and then this wish will be realized. I had just been trying now to embody some of Mr. Rogers' thoughts, and that I think, will help me to keep them in mind."

"A very good plan, dear, and now let me judge how well

you have succeeded." And taking up the paper, Miss Wain read the verses aloud :

"Tell me, oh Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon."—Song of Sol., i., 7.

Tell me, oh Thou whom most I love,
Whither Thy footsteps lead ;
Show me the pastures of Thy flock,
Where at Thy side, they feed.

Fain would I keep Thee still in sight,
All through the toilsome day,
Working with Thee in such delight,
Calmness, and strength, and stay.

Dark are the paths where Thou art not,
Barren, and void of peace ;
Let me but follow where Thou art,
And let my wand'rings cease.

Then will I labour in Thy sight,
Working in all for Thee,
Strengthened by Thy sweet Spirit's might,
Diligent, fervent, free.

Diligent in my daily tasks,
Fervent in love to Thee ;
Happy in Thine approving smile ;
Thus, in Thy service, free.

* * * * *

And at the sultry hour of noon,
Tell me where Thou dost rest ;
Leisure is sweet with Thee alone,
None but Thy friends are blest.

So, in the lull of earthly care,
At midday, or at eve,
To stay with Thee is all my prayer,
Thy counsels to receive.

To hear Thee tell of Thy great love,
My wayward heart forgiven,
The home prepared for me above,
And all the joys of Heaven.

Thus am I strong for toil again,
With conscious succour blest ;
Thus Thou art still my chiefest gain,
Both working, and at rest.

"They are very sweet verses," said Miss Wain, laying down the paper with something of a sigh, for she seemed to feel, instinctively, that such a production from the mind of a girl, not yet quite sixteen, betokened an early ripening for a better world; and she had already learnt to love Ruth so well that the thought of losing her seemed a very sad one. "Death," she said almost bitterly to herself, "will never leave me anyone I care for." Checking, however, this feeling of discontent, she asked Ruth to let her have a copy of the verses.

"With pleasure, I am sure, for, dear Miss Wain, I am much indebted to you. I came and listened, as I often do, when you were taking your senior class, and I liked so much the motto you gave the girls. I mean to take it for my own. I am afraid my great fault is indolence, and it often leads me to do wrong. This morning I gave way to Rose in a matter where I know I ought to have been firm; and with regard to some of my studies, I often feel inclined to slight those which are not to my own taste. German I particularly dislike, but then papa is so anxious I should learn it, that I really must try my best. To-morrow I will sit down to my exercises with a will, and see if I cannot have them perfect before Herr Floss comes in the afternoon.

Laziness, I know, is very unchristian, and yet I seem always falling into the temptation of being idle."

"To be so well aware of your failing, dear Ruth, is something considerable towards its cure. But I daresay the indolence you complain of partly arises from your delicate constitution, and from your having passed your childhood in India. But it is scarcely right of me to be helping you to make excuses; it would be truer kindness to strengthen your resolves against your weak point."

"Yes, indeed, Miss Wain, one's own heart is always ready with excuses, and often they seem very plausible ones."

"My brother," said Miss Wain, "was always so actively good, that every one believed it came quite naturally to him to exert himself for the benefit of others; but I, who knew him better, was well aware that, constitutionally, he really had a great dislike to exertion. But he strove so manfully against his besetting fault, that the outside world knew nothing of it. And then his humility was just as great. One day, when I could not forbear praising him for some self-denying action, he said to me, almost reprovingly, 'Not I, but the grace of God which is in me.' Oh you cannot tell what it has been to lose such a brother;" and the faltering voice of the speaker showed but too plainly how severe that trial had been. Ruth was almost alarmed, for she remembered Lucy Wright's caution against broaching this subject; still she felt that silence now would seem more unkind than words, if she could but find some to soothe and comfort her. "Miss Wain," she said, "you say you are fond of poetry; will you listen to something I read the

other day, which I think may be a comfort to you ; it seems to suit your trouble :

“Think what he was, with thankful heart,
The kind, the tender, and the true ;
Think where he is, from sin apart,
Present with God, yet not estranged from you.”

That the verse brought the intended comfort Ruth knew by the pressure of the hand she just then received, though no words were just then spoken. In a few minutes the clock struck nine, and Ruth, rising from her seat, bade her friend a cheerful “good-night,” saying she meant to begin combating her indolence by going to bed punctually at the time Mrs. Morris wished.



Chapter VI.

HOW THE MOTTO WAS CARRIED OUT.

*"Oh brethren, banish fear,
The world's contempt despise,
Regard its pleasures as too dear,
And hasten towards the prize."*

RUTH rose early the next morning, and went diligently to work in preparation for her German lesson. It cost her a real effort to do so, for not only had she a great dislike to the up-hill work of mastering the separable and inseparable particles of the tedious verbs, but to her ear (somewhat fastidious, we will allow), the guttural sounds of the language were especially distasteful. She had, besides, an instinctive feeling that her life would be a short one, that the studies she was now pursuing would be of little use; and that, looking at things in this light, her lessons were but a waste of precious time. But on the past Sabbath she had set herself diligently to consider what was her duty, and had come to the fixed determination, that whether she

was destined for a longer or a shorter sojourn upon earth, her present most unquestionable duty was to be following out the wishes of her parents. Had not God given her a being that she might glorify Him, and how could she better do so than by honouring and keeping His commandments? and by applying to her duties as a Christian scholar, would she not be doing what in her lay to set a right example to those around her? Though of a very meek and humble mind, and not wishing to overrate her powers of usefulness, she well knew that all have a work given them to do, and she fully entered into the spirit of those lines:

“Let no one say his lantern burns too dim;
In this dark world the Lord hath need of him.”

Thus fully assured of what was her duty, and having sought help in the performance of it, Ruth bravely conquered the obnoxious lesson, and enjoyed, as part of her reward, the warm commendations of Herr Floss, before he left in the afternoon.

She was indulging herself in the evening with reading the last new volume of Longfellow's beautiful poems, which her papa had sent her for a present, when Rose came to her side and made a whispered request for a little money. “Do not ask me anymore, darling, for I really must say no. I think I was quite wrong in giving you what I did yesterday. I had put it by for a special purpose, and you know, Rose, that for you to give what you had from me was no charity of yours.”

“Ah; but only this once, Ruth, because I do so want to buy some silk and beads to make mamma a purse, as a

Christmas present. Surely you will give me some money for such a purpose as that."

"I am sure, Rose, mamma would not wish that I should. She will be much more pleased if you are careful of your own weekly allowance, and sacrifice buying some of the rubbish you often spend it upon, in order to gratify her."

"Well, I must say, Ruth, you are very unkind ; I should have thought you would like me to make a purse for mamma," returned the little girl, who was rather in the habit of making unreasonable remarks when at all displeased.

"Of course, Rose, you know I should like you to make the purse, but unless you purchase the materials yourself, it will not fairly be your present. Besides I tell you, I have a special object in view for my money ; and then it is only encouraging you to be careless, for as long as I supply you with what you want, I know you will never be saving of your own."

"Well, I declare," said Rose pettishly, "it is of no use trying to do right. I made up my mind to day to be more industrious, now the dark evenings are coming, and I thought I would get a piece of work done by the time we go home for the holidays. But it is of no use trying, if one's own sister thwarts all the plans." Rose was turning angrily away, and Ruth had again taken up her book, when her conscience smote her that she had not tried to conciliate her sister, though of course, she knew she had done right in refusing her the money. She called her back again and said, "Rose, dear, don't be angry with me. And oh, pray don't say you will give up trying to be good. You wrote down Miss Wain's motto yesterday, did you not? but only

think, dear, if you are tired of trying to do right at the end of one day, just because things do not go on smoothly, you cannot expect the Master to come *smiling* when life is done."

"Oh no, Ruth, I know that, and I do wish to try ; but this seems such a perplexing matter. Surely I may feel angry because I cannot work mamma a present."

"It is never right to go out of temper even for such a cause," said Ruth, "and besides you know,"—but here she checked herself, for she was going on to say that Rose's want of funds was all owing to her thoughtless way of spending, and this consideration, she felt, was scarcely one to soothe her sister's irritated mind. She paused for a few minutes, and then suggested a plan for Rose to adopt. "You know dear mamma wanted a strip of embroidery worked. Well, suppose you do that instead of the purse. I believe the muslin with the pattern traced on it will only cost 4d., and that I will lend you, so that you may buy the strip and begin at once—only you must promise to return me the money next week, for then I shall want all I have for something particular; and besides it is better for you to get out of debt as soon as you can."

"But can you not think of any better plan, Ruth dear ; I hate embroidery, it is such tedious work, and it will not look half so handsome as the purse, though it will take much longer to do."

"But you know, Rose, how pleased mamma will be if you have sufficient patience to go through with it. She will value it more than if it cost a hundred guineas."

"Well, I suppose that must be it, then ; but really it is a

dreadful undertaking. And, oh Ruth, do you mean indeed I must return you the money? just a little 4d.; surely you could give me that, for I wanted to buy Pauline a new hat with next week's money. Nurse Brooks always excused me a debt, if I wanted particularly to buy something else."

"And so encouraged you in a bad habit," returned Ruth laughing. "No, Rose, I assure you, you will find me a most determined creditor. And for this reason," she added more gravely, stooping forward to kiss Rose's cheek, "because I believe it is right. I must not offend my conscience, and I altogether disapprove of the plan of making presents with other people's money."

Our readers may perhaps feel surprised that these two sisters should have manifested such opposite views with regard to money and the spending of it; but then it must be borne in mind that not only were their dispositions naturally dissimilar, but that also, they had been brought up on principles of an entirely opposite character.

Nurse Brooks, kind and indulgent to a fault, had always made it her chief consideration to see her little charge happy, and, with not always very clear views as to the best way of attaining this desired end, had thought only of securing the pleasure of the passing moment. For this reason, as Rose had said, she had repeatedly excused little debts, because the child had wished to make some other use of the money, and had failed to perceive, in her extreme fondness, that she was really fostering in Rose's mind, a disregard to the sacred nature of obligations, and encouraging her in a habit of careless expenditure, which would be sure to increase as she grew older.

On the other hand, the two aunts with whom Ruth had resided, though not, as we previously observed, pious ladies, yet were endowed with the finest moral feelings; and in their society their niece had imbibed a thorough horror of anything that was not strictly upright and straightforward. The slightest deception or false colouring was to her painful in the extreme; and perhaps the honest sincerity of her motives and actions formed one of the most admirable traits in her sweet character.

Her desire to lay by a little sum of money had arisen in this way. A week previously they had paid their anticipated visit to Harley Hill; and while there, when Ruth enquired about the recovery of Charlie Tile, she heard, that though somewhat better, he was still in a precarious state of health, and his ankle so feeble that he could not stand upright without help. The doctor had recommended a visit to the sea-side as the most likely thing to restore his strength. Mrs. Clayton had kindly undertaken to defray the necessary expenses, and had arranged for his being received into the family of a former servant, now living at Margate.

It had been settled that he should start in about a fortnight from that time, when another unexpected expense appeared necessary. The doctor said it was absolutely essential that his leg should be fitted with some surgical apparatus in order to support the injured ankle, and *this* would of course be likely to cost a considerable sum of money. Mrs. Clayton was unable to promise more, for what she had already undertaken some personal sacrifices would have to be made; yet, still unwilling to deprive the

boy of the intended benefit, she had laughingly said, once or twice, that she must solicit subscriptions from amongst her friends. The idea had at once struck Ruth that she would contribute all she could amass by the time specified; and it was for this reason that she had been unwilling to allow Rose a longer period for the repayment of her loan.

The last arrival at the school was a young lady who had only come the previous week—a Miss Todd, of about fourteen, very rich, very fat, and, moreover, very ignorant and backward. She had unbounded faith in her riches, and seemed to think her money omnipotent. When she first entered the school-room, it was with an air of conscious dignity, and she looked round on her future companions as though anxious to impress them at once with an idea of her magnificent possessions and her supreme contempt for anything like poverty. There were not wanting at Manor House, any more than in other schools, girls who were prepared to do homage to the wealth of their companions, and willing to barter their services and time for a reasonable consideration. Of course, Miss Todd was far above taking the vulgar trouble of writing exercises, and she had come to school with the fixed determination never to fatigue herself where money could procure a substitute. Accordingly, the first time she was required to write an exercise she applied to a merry looking girl near her, pleading that she had a headache, and promising an ample reward if she would take the business off her hands. She was, of course, a stranger there, and, moreover, no discernor of character, or she might have noticed the mischievous twinkle in Clara Arnold's eye, as she readily assented to do what she wished.

Fully aware she was doing wrong, Miss Arnold nevertheless yielded to the temptation of exposing the idle girl to contempt; for not only was the idea one which would be sure to create some fun, but would also prove to Miss Todd that her money was not so mighty as she imagined. She took the slate, wrote out the questions, and then, with some deliberation and much internal merriment filled in the answers. Miss Todd received her slate back with languid thanks, and having condescendingly offered the munificent reward of 6d., which was as indignantly declined, she awaited her turn for going up to Miss Smith. It was with great astonishment that her teacher commenced reading what was on the slate. At the bottom of the first side she paused and looked the new comer compassionately in the face, fully convinced that her mind must be affected. But, no, the girl looked as calmly indifferent as usual, and Miss Smith, unable to decide whether or not this production was the result of impertinence, dismissed her for the present, and saved the exercise to show to Mrs. Morris.

That lady could not restrain a hearty fit of laughter as she read aloud the ludicrous composition. The questions were of a miscellaneous character, and were taken from a book which Mrs. Morris was accustomed to use, as a test of the knowledge and ability of any new pupil.

We are bound to say that had the framing of the replies been left to Miss Todd, they would, in all probability, have been equally wide of the truth, though we may suppose they would have been less ludicrously expressed. Our readers shall judge for themselves :

“ Why did Cato kill himself at Utica ? ”

"Because his mother declined to procure for him the top brick of the chimney."

"Who founded Rome?"

"The honour of that action is disputed by two illustrious persons—General Tom Thumb and the Pope."

"Were the tin mines of Cornwall known to the ancients?"

"Yes, they were discovered by the adventurous grandparents of Adam and Eve."

"Who is supposed to have been the first to arrive at the conclusion that the earth moves round the sun?"

"The man in the moon, who was led to this decision, not only on account of the facilities afforded by his commanding position, but also because he enjoyed that privacy and seclusion so necessary for making important calculations."

"Was not the study of arithmetic at one time considered too difficult for the mind of man?"

"Yes, for the ancient philosophers found themselves entirely posed by the fact, that though the circumference of the earth is estimated at 25,000 miles, yet there is but one *Acre* on the whole surface of the globe."

"Name the two inland watering-places most frequented in England?"

"The pump and the water-butt."

"What animal has always been considered the best adapted for supporting a lengthened abstinence from food and water?"

"The camel; but modern naturalists are now of unanimous opinion that in this invaluable quality it is infinitely surpassed

by the rocking-horse, there being several authentic instances on record to prove that individuals of this race have existed for generations, without one particle of nourishment having been received into their system."

"Detail a few of the leading advantages arising to savage and barbarous tribes from their recent intercourse with more civilised nations?"

"The free sale and circulation of pomatum amongst the Tomahawk and Scalp Indians, a knowledge of the useful and highly lucrative art of making fire-stove aprons diffused throughout the fishing villages of West Greenland, and the introduction of cheese-plates among the aborigines of Australia."

It was some time after Mrs. Morris had completed the perusal of the exercise before she was sufficiently composed to make any remark. When at length her laughter had somewhat exhausted itself, she told Miss Smith that she felt sure she knew the handwriting. She was rather expert at recognizing any she had previously seen, and was convinced that this was not the work of a stranger. They then agreed to compare it with the writing in some of the elder girls' exercise books, and of course were not long in discovering its affinity to that of Clara Arnold. This young lady was then summoned, and Mrs. Morris, with the gravest face she could assume, asked an explanation of her conduct.

"Really, ma'am," replied Clara, "I only did it to expose her laziness, which is enough to disgust anyone. She is, besides, so purse-proud, and thinks her money can buy everybody, that I took this opportunity of showing her that some of us are above sixpenny bribes."

"I cannot consider what you have done either ladylike or kind," returned Mrs. Morris, "though I am willing to acknowledge that her offered bribe was little better than an insult. Under the circumstances, I shall only require that you make Miss Todd a pleasant apology, and beg that you will try to remember on future occasions that there are more *Christian* ways of reproving idleness and meanness than the one you have adopted to-day."

When Clara had left the room, Mrs. Morris again took up the slate, and still smiling at the grotesque composition, remarked to Miss Smith that there really was a considerable amount of ingenuity displayed in the matter. "I believe," she said, "that I myself should have puzzled for an hour before I should have thought of such strange combinations. What a mockery to introduce pomatum to a North American Indian, or to imagine that the poor Greenlanders should cultivate a taste for ornaments for the fire-stove."

That evening, when the girls had gone up to bed, Clara Arnold went to hang her dress in a closet devoted to that purpose. She here encountered Fanny Carter, and the subject of the morning was again discussed. "I assure you" said Clara, "I never enjoyed a joke more. It was the greatest fun to pay that idle girl out; I highly enjoyed my revenge."

At this moment Miss Wain, just passing the closet door, heard the end of Clara's speech. She stepped in and said gravely, "You must have found revenge very sweet, Miss Arnold, since it seems you preferred it to exercising that courtesy and forbearance which our Saviour enjoins. But how about our motto? Can you expect that the Master

shall come *smiling* if you neglect His commands to gratify yourself?"

"Oh, Miss Wain, the motto! I entirely forgot it, I did indeed. I assure you that for the first part of the week I tried to keep it in mind, and to act upon it, but to-day I never thought one word about it."

With much anxiety and earnest prayer did Miss Wain watch the effect of her motto upon the lives of those who had promised to try and make it the standard of their conduct. Many times she rejoiced to see that the rising passion was suddenly controlled by the mere force (as she was well assured) that on such conduct the Master could not smile. For the same reason, too, she observed the kind action, though at first refused, immediately after performed; and an improvement in the diligence shown by some in school hours, was, she felt perfectly sure, to be attributed to a higher cause than the mere pleasing of any *earthly* teacher. Yet on the other hand, there were instances sad to see, in which the motto, not only disregarded and never carried out, was utterly renounced by some, who said that they had been carried away by the warmth of their feelings, when they had undertaken to adopt it; and that, finding the service of Christ required such a constant government of the heart and life, they should certainly postpone such efforts for the present.

With one more incident we will close this chapter, lest the subject (excellent in itself) should become wearisome to our young readers. Of all Ruth's studies, music was the favourite. She was gifted with a correct ear, and, moreover, a very delicate touch, the muscles of her hands possessing

that extreme flexibility so often observed in those born in India. Her master was delighted with the progress she made, and had one day praised her more highly than usual. She was playing Rosellen's "Rose de Peronne," and she ran through the variations of that beautiful air with such clearness and rapidity that Mr. Wilson was particularly pleased, and told her at the conclusion of the lesson that she stood a very excellent chance of obtaining the first-class prize. Flushed with pleasure at this announcement, Ruth returned to the school-room, eagerly asking for Rose, that she might make her a confidant in her joy. To her great distress, however, she heard that her sister had been behaving very badly during her temporary absence, and that Mrs. Morris, as a punishment, had sentenced her to spend the remainder of the day alone. It appeared that when her duties for the afternoon were finished, she had gone to her play-box for Pauline, whom she was now busily engaged in short coating. The doll was not in the box, but to Rose's dismay, was found to have slipped between it and the wall, and with horror she saw that one side of its head was crushed in. It instantly flashed through her mind that the mischief must have been done by a little girl who had been helping her to make the clothes, and who often went to the box for the purpose of trying how they fitted. Without a moment's pause for consideration, in a perfect fury of rage, Rose dashed across the room towards the spot where this child was sitting, and giving her a sudden and violent push against the wall, had produced a bump on the back of her head.

Poor Ruth was deeply distressed to hear of this outburst

of passion; nevertheless she was inclined to resent the punishment Rose was undergoing, for never since she had been at Manor House had she witnessed the infliction of such severity. She went directly to Mrs Morris, and begged earnestly that for this once the sentence might be commuted. But, no, Mrs. Morris was inexorable, though kind in all she said to Ruth. "It has pained me deeply, my dear girl, to have to punish your sister thus, but justice requires that I should. For one thing, this is not the first offence of the kind. She was slapping one of the little Allett's the other day, and on that occasion I warned her of what would be the result of a similar offence; so that she was well aware of the consequences."

"But oh, Mrs. Morris, if you would only forgive her this once, I do think she would never do it again."

"Listen quietly to me, dear child, and I will show you why I cannot do as you wish. You know that to a great extent parents and teachers stand to children in the place of God, and it is their duty to govern as for Him. Now, having warned your sister of the consequences of her violence, if I were to refrain from punishing her, she would, in all probability, consider all my future warnings as only idle threats. And she would be very likely to get a similar impression with regard to the retribution which God denounces on sin. I do not mean to say that she would literally argue this out to herself, but she would naturally be impressed with the idea that, since earthly preceptors threaten and fail to fulfil, so God may in like manner never execute what He has said He will on the impenitent and ungodly. Thus you see, that to excuse this punishment

would really be a moral injury to Rose. And then there is another reason why I cannot accede to your request ; it would be unjust of me to do so. Your sister is only *one* of our household, and of course I am bound to protect the interests of *all*. Little Mary Carter, who is the injured party on this occasion, is, I know, far too amiable to wish Rose punished ; still it is not right that violence should be practised with impunity. 'The way of transgressors is hard ;' God has said so, and nothing can alter that truth."

Ruth was too right-minded not to see the justice of all Mrs. Morris said, and she felt that it would be useless to plead further ; so, thanking her governess for having taken the trouble to explain the reasons for her refusal, she turned sadly away to the school-room. In how short a time her joy had been turned into grief. She thought no more about the music master's praise, nor her own bright anticipations of the first-class prize. No subject but Rose's disgrace found a place in her mind, and, quite unable to settle to any employment, she sat listlessly in a corner by herself, until the tea-bell rang, and she had to go with the others into the dining-room. She had scarcely taken her seat at table, when Mrs. Morris came in, and going up to Ruth, laid her hand kindly on her shoulder and said, "Perhaps, dear, you would like to take your sister's tea to her yourself."

"Thank you," said Ruth, rising instantly, and feeling only too grateful for this opportunity of going to Rose. She took the tray from the servant's hand, and went upstairs to the little room, whither she was told Rose had been sent. She knocked at the door, but receiving no answer, she opened it and went in. Rose was sitting at the window,

her face extremely pale, and wearing such a look of thorough remorse as Ruth had never seen there before. The sight quite overcame her affectionate feelings; she hastily put down the tray, and going up to Rose, threw her arms round her neck, and burst into a fit of uncontrolled tears. For some minutes not a word was spoken, but at last Rose sobbed out, "Oh, Ruth, you don't know how miserable I am; I shall never be happy any more. I have done the most cruel, the most unjust thing in the world. Mary Carter must hate me for it, I am sure. So kind as she is, and then to have struck her for nothing. Oh, Ruth, I never felt so ashamed in my life. I was vexed with myself the very moment I had done it, and there came such a dreadful pain at my heart that I almost felt as if I should faint; and the worst of all is that now I feel sure I did the mischief myself. It is a good thing Mrs. Morris sent me here to sit alone, or it might never have come into my head. Do you know, Ruth, I feel positive I know how it happened. I was playing with Pauline after dinner, till the very moment the school-bell rang, and then I ran in a great hurry to put her away. The box was turned round towards the wall, and as I opened the lid, I was looking round at something Jane Drake was doing. I heard something fall, but I thought it was only a great atlas which stood against my box, and never looked to see. So I have no doubt, now, that the doll slipped down behind the box, and so it all came of my own carelessness."

Having finished her confession, poor Rose again burst into tears, and all Ruth's efforts to quiet and console her were unavailing. She refused to taste her tea, and declared

that she should never cease to be miserable, and that she was sure Mary Carter would always hate and despise her. In vain Ruth told her that little Mary was so gentle and sweet-tempered that she would be certain to forgive Rose when she knew how sorry she was; all arguments and persuasions seemed useless, and Ruth having spent a whole hour with her sister, was at last obliged to leave, for she had to prepare some classes for the next day. Returning to the school-room, she encountered Miss Wain, who enquired about Rose, and quite agreed that little Mary would be ready to forgive, even before she was asked. "She is the dearest little thing," said Miss Wain. "I have often read of faultless children, but I never met with one so near perfection before. Of course I do not suppose she is entirely without faults, but still, I have never been able to discern them, though I have lived with her now for more than six months, and have narrowly watched her conduct."

"She seems a general favourite," rejoined Ruth.

"Yes, and no wonder; I never knew a child so considerate for the feelings of others. I had promised one day to mend her glove, and had unfortunately quite forgotten it. When we walked out, I happened to notice that she kept one finger tucked back in the palm of her hand; and, as I afterwards discovered, this was done to prevent my seeing the hole, and regretting that I had not fulfilled my promise."

"And you always find her the same?" inquired Ruth.

"Yes, always self-forgetting and kind. During the short holidays I went to her home for a few days. I had taken

Mary a new Sunday book, with which she was very much pleased, and on the Sunday afternoon she had seated herself by me to enjoy reading it. Her little brother, who was in the room, became rather troublesome, and was dismissed to the nursery, in order that he might not interrupt us. Much displeased at being banished, he sat up a loud cry, and little Mary was sent to quiet him. She rose at once, and laid aside her own book, without even a glance of discontent; and within a very few minutes she had persuaded her brother to be quite quiet and good."

"She must be a Christian at heart."

"Ah, yes; that is the secret of her sweetness. One sees this shining in her face. I have felt that it would be almost an insult to ask her if she loved Christ. Her life shows it plainly enough, and besides, I have often watched with pleasure how she brightens at the mention of our Saviour. I always see her eyes light up whenever His Name is uttered."

"Do you think, Miss Wain, that she might go up and speak to Rose; it is dreadful to see her so unhappy."

"I will go to Mrs. Morris at once, and ask her permission," said the young teacher kindly; and Ruth, comforted by this assurance, proceeded to set about her studies.

Mrs. Morris at once gave the desired permission, and little Mary hastened to her friend. We will not go through the repeated expressions of Rose's sorrow, nor of Mary's gentle comfort; but when at last convinced that her friend had really forgiven her, Rose then began to speak of her conduct in the sight of God. "He can never love me,"

she said, "for I do such wicked things. I never keep good a whole day."

"But I know He is always willing to forgive us, when we are sorry for being naughty. Have you asked Him, Rose? Don't you remember what it says in the 'Daily Life of a Christian Child' about doing wrong ?

"She must kneel, then, in her chamber,
Confess what she has done;
And ask to be forgiven,
For the sake of God's dear Son."

"Yes, Mary, that is all very well for you, because you only do little things that are naughty. But I do such very bad things. I scarcely do anything to please God."

"But, Rose dear, don't you remember how Miss Wain told us last Sunday that God does not forgive us because we are good, but because Jesus died for us. Oh, and then don't you recollect it said just the same thing in that story we read together about little Nellie, the water-cress girl? You know when she talked to her father, and tried to explain things to him, she said :

"And that not for anything good we have done,
But all for the sake of the well-beloved Son."

Thus did the little peace-maker strive to bring peace into her friend's heart; nor did she strive in vain. Rose listened to all she said, and was indeed guided by it for the future. Her contrition on this occasion was most sincere and deep, and this was the last time she was ever known to raise her hand to strike.

In the course of a few days she had arranged a plan for making reparation to little Mary. She resolved on giving

her Pauline for her own ; and Miss Smith, who went one day to London, purchased for her a new wax head. Thus renovated, and dressed in her new clothes, she was handed over to Mary's possession. The latter was at first unwilling to accept it, but when Rose assured her that she should never play with it again, but should put it quite away, if her friend refused to take it, Mary's reluctance was overcome. The doll changed owners, but it would be difficult to say which enjoyed the possession most—the new or the old mamma.



Chapter VII.

THE AMIABILITY PRIZE.

*“ Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe’er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts,
To keep and cultivate ;
And a work of lowly love to do,
For the Lord on whom I wait.”*

THE generality of the prizes at Manor House were distributed according to the usual system in schools ; that is, they were given to those who, having the most marks for any special branch of study, were supposed to have shown more diligence and perseverance in that branch than the rest of their companions. But to what is called (and often erroneously) the “good conduct” prize, Mrs. Morris had a particular objection. She had herself been educated in boarding-schools, and had seen repeated instances in which this institution had been greatly perverted, and the prize carried off by some artful girl, who managed to obtain favour with the teachers by outward demureness of

behaviour, but who was yet ill-tempered and unkind to her companions, and who would sometimes even tell tales of them, exaggerating what was wrong in their conduct in order to make her own appear better by the contrast. This prize, then, Mrs. Morris had long since abolished, and had established two in its place. The former of these was for punctuality and neatness, and the winner of it was that young lady who had the fewest marks against her for being down late, for having untidy hair or dress, and for clothes put away unmended. The other was termed the "amiability prize," and Mrs. Morris was indebted for the idea to a lady who had told her of its institution in some of the Australian boarding-schools.

For a long time Mrs. Morris (ever anxious for the moral benefit of her charge) had deliberated within herself, whether there should be two divisions of this prize, one for the elder, and one for the younger portion of the girls; but she had at last concluded that it would be more beneficial to have but one, and that open to all alike. On consideration, it appeared that the opportunities for kindness and good nature were equally balanced in the senior and junior classes; for though, of course, the little ones were more dependant for substantial help upon their older neighbours, yet they had ample opportunity for doing them little services in return, for

"It needs a loving heart,
Much more than *strength* to prove,
How much a little child may do
For others by its love."

So the "amiability prize" was equally open to all, from

the youngest to the eldest; and this was the way in which the pupils themselves adjudged who was most worthy to take it. Every evening, when the girls assembled for prayers, Miss Smith produced a little bag, in which each one placed a slip of paper, bearing the name of the young lady whom she considered to have that day shown the greatest proofs of amiability. This being done daily, gave a very fair idea of the pupils' conduct throughout the whole half-year; and at the close of the term the slips were carefully counted, and the prize, of course, given to that one whose name occurred most frequently. We do not say that this liberty of judging for themselves was never abused; some would not take the trouble to put down any name at all; others always gave that of some particular friend; while some few even were found so carried away by conceit as to be in the habit of writing down their own names.

However, on the whole, the plan worked fairly and well; and that the prize of the previous term had been rightly adjudged, we feel sure our readers will agree, when they hear that it was carried off by little Mary Carter, and that Lucy Wright came the next in succession. With regard to the present half-year, the general idea was, that either Ruth or Lucy Wright would be the successful candidate; not, let our readers suppose, that little Mary had lost her character for kindness and amiability, but because, having been away for nearly six weeks after the summer vacation had ended, it could not be expected that she would get sufficient votes to entitle her to the prize.

Lucy Wright, too, had been absent for about a fortnight

lately, on account of her mother's illness; and it was only this fact that made her friends doubtful as to her chance, for she was, as much as ever, a favourite in the school, while Ruth, beloved by *most*, on account of her gentle manners, was still disliked by a *few*, partly for her somewhat reserved ways, and partly because she would never join in anything at all against the established laws of the house.

It was now drawing very near the Christmas holidays, and the conversation of the young ladies often ran upon the topic of the prizes, and who were likely to carry them off. Jane Drake, who was by no means an agreeable girl, had for a long time felt a particular spite against Ruth, because she had dissuaded Rose from forming any very great friendship with her, and had often refused to lend her money for projects which Jane had planned, but which Ruth had thought undesirable for her sister to join in. It was therefore greatly to Miss Drake's annoyance that she found Ruth was likely to win two prizes. The one for music she felt sure she had no power to prevent her gaining, for Mr. Wilson had often said lately that, of all his pupils, Miss Elliott did him the most credit, not only because of her natural talent, but because she attended so carefully to his directions when practising alone that he always found her new lesson well studied. There was, then, no hope of thwarting her in this direction; but with regard to the amiability prize, she had of course the same influence as the other girls. She therefore began daily to vote for Lucy Wright, not at all because she liked her, but simply with the view of swelling her list against that of Ruth.

One evening—less than a week before the school broke

up, and in fact only the day previous to that on which all the marks were to be counted—the bag had, as usual, been handed round before Miss Smith read prayers. When prayers were over, the younger pupils were preparing to go up to bed, and Miss Smith stood at the door, waiting to bid them each “good-night” as they passed out, when the house-keeper came hurriedly to tell her that a fine display of fireworks was taking place at a boys’ school close by, in honor of the approaching holidays. Hearing this intelligence, the girls hastened upstairs, and ran to the back windows of the house, from which a good view of the performance could be had.

Jane Drake, when she heard what was going on, happened to be at the further end of the room; and having her lap full of things which she had just taken out of her play-box, she was obliged to replace them before she could follow her companions. In consequence of this, she was left the last in the school-room. Eager not to lose her chance of the sight, she hastily threw her things into the box, and ran towards the door; but as she passed the upper end of the table, she observed the bag of votes, which had been left there by Miss Smith—she having hastened upstairs after the girls, to see that they did not open the windows, as some of the little ones had colds. Immediately an idea flashed through the brain of Jane Drake—she would open the bag, and extract some of the slips which bore the name of Ruth Elliott. For this purpose, she tumbled a heap out on the table, but found at once, that to sort these little pieces of paper, some of which were soft, adhered to one another, would be a work of considerable time. As she replaced them in the bag, her

eye fell on a half sheet of paper, which lay close by, just where Miss Smith had been sitting. It was thin foreign paper, and of a peculiar tinge, being the outside half of a letter which the teacher had that evening received from a friend in India. Jane tore it up into about thirty little slips, and having scrawled on each the name of Lucy Wright, she scrambled them into the bag, the ink on several of them still wet. "There," she said to herself, as she now proceeded in quest of her companions, "now I shall have my revenge on that conceited Ruth, for certainly thirty votes will settle the matter; and no one will ever suspect what I have done."

Had Jane had time to deliberate on the wickedness of such conduct, she would never have acted as she did, for though, as we have said, by no means an agreeable girl, she was yet far from being thoroughly bad; and we must hope that it was the suddenness of the temptation which led her into such an unfair and deceitful act. It is but another instance to prove to us how necessary it is for us always to be on the watch against sin, and how impossible it is for us to withstand the darts of temptation, unless we are clothed in the armour of God.

The following day Mrs. Morris and Miss Smith, together, sorted out and counted up the votes in the bag. "I am surprised," said the latter, when their work was concluded, "to find that Miss Wright's votes are so much in advance of Miss Elliott's. She has a majority of twenty-five. The general idea has been that there would scarcely be any difference between them, and I must say that I thought myself the advantage would more likely be on the other

side, on account of Miss Wright's having been home to see her mother."

"It is almost impossible to form a correct guess in the matter," returned Mrs. Morris, "seeing that the votes are so much diffused, not only among so many individuals, but extending over such a space of time. Of course, the decision is fair; you always keep the bag in your own possession, and therefore there can be no opportunity for deception. How it vexes me to see such careless scrawls," she continued, taking up some of the slips, "Why can they not write down a name in a ladylike manner? Here is one which is such an entire blotch, that, were not the name quite familiar to me, I should really have a difficulty in deciphering it. Oh, I see it is Jane Drake's writing; no wonder, then, for that girl is the very impersonation of carelessness."

"Just let me look at that piece of paper," said Miss Smith, extending her hand for it. "It is a part of an Indian letter I had yesterday, and I particularly wanted to keep it to see the post-mark on it. I suppose I must have left it about."

"How amused the girls would be to hear their teacher owning to her own carelessness," returned Mrs. Morris, laughing. "No doubt if you left it about, Jane Drake was glad to make use of it, for such girls as she is, never have anything for their own use. But now we have counted all the marks, and I must hurry away to town, or otherwise I shall not be back from the purchase of all these prizes, in time for dinner." So saying, Mrs. Morris left the room, Miss Smith still sitting at the table, with the slip of paper in her hand. She was disappointed to find

that Ruth was not the winner of the prize, for her steady, painstaking character had made her a favourite with her teacher ; while Lucy Wright, good-natured and thoughtless, was often very careless with her lessons, and frequently gave very unnecessary trouble to those who taught her. Mingled with these thoughts, was Miss Smith's vexation at losing her paper with the post-mark she wanted to observe. Suddenly glancing at the slip she held in her hand, it occurred to her that if there were any more of the same, she might be able from some of them to decipher the post-mark. Turning over the little heaps for this purpose, she of course found a great many bearing the name of Lucy Wright. " But they are all in Jane Drake's writing," she thought to herself ; " how can that be ? The letter only reached me yesterday." She then counted the pieces, and, finding that there were as many as thirty, felt convinced that there was something wrong in the matter, and resolved to sift it thoroughly. For this purpose she went in search of Mrs. Morris ; but that lady had already started, so nothing remained but to put aside the papers securely, and consult with her on her return. In the course of the day, when thinking the matter over, Miss Smith recalled the circumstances of the previous evening, and distinctly recollected to have left the paper and the vote-bag on the table, when she ran upstairs with the girls. When the matter had been duly discussed by Mrs. Morris and herself in the evening, they agreed to summon Jane Drake to their presence, and interrogate her on the subject. But they could elicit nothing satisfactory from her. She looked so very uncomfortable when she entered the room, and coloured with such

conscious guilt when questioned as to her knowledge of the slips, that they felt convinced she was not speaking the truth, when she denied having written more than her own vote the previous night. Finding that she persevered in this declaration; and, being unable to prove her statement a falsehood, she was dismissed.

"I feel persuaded," said Miss Smith, when she had left the room, "that she really has acted dishonourably in some way. I know she is not very fond of Ruth Elliott, and perhaps she has done this to prevent her winning the amiability prize."

"I am truly sorry," returned Mrs. Morris, "that this should have happened. Of course, as the matter stands, Miss Wright must take the prize to which she is entitled by her majority of votes. We cannot *prove* that some have been given unfairly, unless Jane Drake should confess herself to be guilty, which I quite agree with you in thinking she is. Under these circumstances I am not at all sorry she is to leave us this Christmas. I have always had a dread of having to expel a pupil; and at the same time I could not, in the interests of her companions, keep one who should act in such a manner as this."


The subject was after this dropped, and the whole school was busy in preparing for their approaching separation. Ciphering-books were ruled and put aside to take home; drawings were selected from the general portfolio and carefully packed for the same purpose; while many were busy in finishing pieces of work intended as presents for their parents or friends. Jane Drake was, of course, behindhand with what she was doing (a small piece of wool-

work intended for an urn-stand) and in all probability would never have taken the trouble to finish it had she not been promised a reward of five shillings by an uncle who was her guardian. The last day had arrived, and she had still nearly a whole stripe to work. To add to her troubles, she had, with her accustomed carelessness, mislaid the skein of magenta wool, which was necessary to complete her work, and was now wandering round the school-room, asking each of the girls if she had any of a similar shade. No one could oblige her, and now she had asked all but Ruth. Nothing but dire necessity would have induced her to ask a favour of her, but under the circumstances, she felt she had better try her chance. So, coming up to the table where Ruth was sitting at work, she said in a melancholy voice, "I suppose it is of no use asking you, Miss Elliott, whether you have any wool like this. I have been all round the school, and nobody can give it me, so I shall lose my five shillings after all."

"Well, I don't know but what I may have it," replied Ruth kindly, "for I had several shades in use when I was working that music-stool for mamma. At all events, I will go downstairs to see for it, for I packed away all the remaining wools in a drawer in the box-room."

Ruth's search was successful, and she soon returned with a skein of the desired shade in her hand. As Jane took it, and hastily thanking her, turned away to her seat, she felt an inward pang of remorse at receiving a kindness from one whom she had been so delighted to injure.

In the afternoon the prizes were distributed, and Ruth



received the much-desired "first class music." It was a volume of "Mendelssohn's Songs" without words, and was very handsomely bound. Rose, who had all along been lamenting that she should certainly have no prize to carry home, was delighted to find that the "third class writing" was awarded to her. Somewhat to Lucy Wright's surprise, she was found to be entitled to the "amiability." Coming back to her seat by Ruth, she told her that she had quite expected to hear she was the winner of that.

"I am sure, Ruth, you are more really amiable than I am, and then, too, I was away for a fortnight. But how pleased mamma will be! And indeed," she added gaily, "it is truly gratifying to find oneself in such repute of one's neighbours. I am half inclined to grow conceited on the strength of it."

In the evening, Ruth, overcome by the bustle and excitement of the day, was suffering from such a violent headache that she retired to bed more than an hour before the others. Jane Drake happened to hear Rose speaking of this to another girl, and again the feeling of remorse came strongly over her. But now it was too late; the prizes were all distributed, and she thought she had better keep her own counsel. But she found it impossible to endure the reproaches of conscience for the wrong she had done; and at last, unable to bear the merry chatter of her companions, she left the room, resolved to unburden her mind to Ruth. She tapped softly at the door, and was told to come in by Ruth, who, suffering so much with her head, had as yet been unable to get to sleep. Coming to the side of the bed, she eagerly seized Ruth's hand, and then gave way to a long

fit of weeping. Ruth, quite unaware of the cause of her grief, imagined she had not been able to complete her work, and said to her kindly, "Don't cry about it, Jane. You will still have an hour or two in the morning, before you are fetched. I will call you early, if you like, for I generally awake before it is light; and then, if you set briskly to work before breakfast, I think you will be sure to get it done. I would help you myself, only I know that your uncle wished it to be all your own work."

Still more distressed at Ruth's kind way of speaking, Jane sobbed on piteously, and, with broken sentences, confessed to her what she had done.

Ruth was deeply shocked; not so much for the loss of the prize, for in her humility, she had always supposed that Lucy Wright was a much greater favourite than herself, but the idea of such an act of deception was thoroughly repulsive to her right-minded notions. She honestly told Jane so; assuring her, however, of her entire forgiveness. Her second thought was for her friend. "Of course, Jane, you will make a confession of all this to Mrs. Morris, but I beg you will not mention it to Lucy. I could not bear that she should be disappointed of the pleasure of taking home the prize."

"And you are willing to give it up?" enquired Jane, whose selfish mind could scarcely comprehend such generous and delicate conduct.

"I would rather give it up than have Lucy disappointed. Besides, this is her only prize, while I have a very handsome one for music. And then, Jane, I feel, too, I am doing

right about it; and, as Miss Wain says, nothing makes us really so happy as doing what we know Christ would have us do."

Jane once again assured her of her regret, and then turned away. But she did not go back to her companions. Unwilling that they should see the traces of her tears, she remained alone; and sitting silently in the dark, her thoughts dwelt much upon the behaviour Ruth had evinced. It had a great effect upon her mind; it convinced her of the reality of a Christian's faith and happiness; and so lasting was the impression, that it greatly conduced, though years after, in leading her to the firm resolve of choosing for herself a similar way of life. Before she left the school, the next day, she made a full confession and apology for her conduct to Mrs. Morris, but at Ruth's repeated request no mention of it was made to Lucy Wright, and she ever remained in ignorance of the true state of the case.

Our readers perhaps feel a regret that, after all, Ruth did not carry home the amiability prize, and that her right to it was known to so few. But we beg them to look at the matter in the light of God's Word, and then their regrets will cease. Better far than any earthly approbation was her inward consciousness that God, who saw in secret, would reward her openly. Pleasant as it would have been to carry home to her parents such a tangible proof that she was beloved by her companions, it was infinitely better to feel in the depths of her heart that Christ, her best friend of all, had approved of what she had done. Could she have looked along the vista of years, and seen what an influence

her conduct exerted on the future life of Jane Drake, she would have rejoiced still more. As it was, she simply did what she felt to be right, and left the rest to her Master in Heaven. He wrought out the result we have told, for He is ever faithful to His word, and He long ago assured us that "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."



Chapter VIII.

THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

*"Now theirs was converse, such as it behoves
Man to maintain, and such as God approves;
Their views, indeed, were indistinct and dim,
And yet successful, being aimed at Him.*

THERE were not many in Manor House who slept late on the morning of that 18th of December. Long before daylight the girls were arousing one another with the pleasant intelligence that at last the holidays had come. Breakfast was despatched with unusual rapidity, and, immediately it was over, the departures began to take place. Those who were to travel home by themselves, had no idea of lingering behind, now that the desired moment of release had arrived ; and accordingly the school was thinned at a very early hour.

A lunch was provided about twelve o'clock for those who remained to be fetched, in which number the Elliotts were included. Their mamma was not expected before two o'clock ; and Ruth employed the forenoon in arranging her school-box,

re-covering her books, and leaving all in order for the following half-year.

Rose was high busy, working almost frantically at her piece of embroidery; not in hopes of finishing it, for that would have been impossible, but only with the idea of accomplishing the half of the strip. Our young readers may feel disposed to laugh at Rose's want of perseverance, but they must remember that she had never before been rightly encouraged to carry on a piece of work; and this half strip of embroidery was the result of a real and satisfactory effort on her part. So Mrs. Elliott thought when it was displayed to her; and so pleasant seemed her commendations to the affectionate child, and so new the pleasure of being praised for steadiness and industry, that Rose undertook to complete the strip during the holidays; and not only promised, but actually performed, for before she returned to Manor House, she was able to place the finished piece of embroidery in her mamma's hands.

But, now, to return to this 18th of December. It was indeed a happy party that assembled round the fireside, that evening, at Mr. Elliott's. All were delighted to be again together, and the servants declared that the house had never seemed so cheerful since the day when the girls had first left it for school. As may be supposed, Mr. and Mrs. Elliott were much gratified to see the prizes which they had brought home with them; and their daily intercourse with their children convinced them that they had both considerably improved in their various studies, and must have made a good use of the past half-year.

A great source of anxiety to them, however, was the

continued delicacy of Ruth's health, and especially the troublesome cough she now almost always had. The doctor was consulted; and, with many directions for care and good nursing, gave express orders that she should never be out in the night air. With the exception of her cough, however, and a slight feeling of debility, she suffered no pain, and was able thoroughly to enjoy the gaieties of the festive season, in her own quiet way. Mrs. Clayton and Walter came to spend Christmas with them, and their society was, of course, a great pleasure in itself.

One morning, Ruth and Walter were busy together, making laurel decorations and paper roses for the adornment of the national school-room, in which a treat for the children was to take place. Holding up the ends of a finished wreath, Walter exclaimed proudly, "There, Ruth, I think that looks glorious. These festoons will show up nicely by gaslight, will they not? What time in the evening are we supposed to go to witness the gambols of these juveniles?"

"I think papa said you were all to go and help serve them with their tea."

"But why do you not say 'we,' Ruth? Surely you are coming too?"

"Why, unfortunately, I cannot, Walter. Dr. Gates says I must not be out in the night air at all this winter, on account of my cough."

"Oh, I forgot your tiresome cough, Ruth. But cannot Dr. Gates give you something to cure it? Surely, out of all those mysterious rows of bottles in his surgery, he might find some medicine that would do you good."

"Oh, Walter, how funny you are ; what odd things you say ! Of course he gives me some medicine, but though it relieves my cough, it has not cured it yet."

"Then you must excuse my saying that he is not worthy to be called an M.D. If he has not the proper thing in his own surgery, why does he not send to some of the other fellows round the country ? I suppose they don't all keep the same stuff in their bottles. I tell you what it is, Ruth ; just wait till I start on my travels, and then see if I cannot bring you home a cure for your cough. If it is not to be had in England, I'll fetch it from foreign parts. I'll anchor my ship at every likely spot, and send out boats requesting the natives to allow me an audience of all their medical men, as I am in search of a valuable drug to cure the cough of a most inestimable young lady at home."

"Walter, I cannot help laughing at what you say," returned Ruth. "But, indeed, though I thank you heartily for all your kind intentions, I do not think any medicine could be found to make me quite well. I do not think I shall live to grow old, and I feel sure that this cough is only the beginning of the end. You know I have never been strong."

"But, Ruth dear," said Walter, with his eyes full of tears, and his gay voice changed to one of deep concern, "surely you are frightening yourself. I cannot bear to think of what you are saying. Since the first day I saw you, I have loved you and Rose like sisters, and it is dreadful to think of losing you. You must be mistaken ; yes, indeed you must."

"I think not, Walter. And so we have seemed like sisters

to you? That is strange, for do you know, as we came home that first evening we had met, I said to mamma, that you had made me wish, for the first time in my life, that I had a brother. I am sure your friendship has been a great happiness to us. And now, Walter, I just want to ask you one question. As a sister, I know you will not think me rude or interfering. I have had it on my mind a good while, and perhaps I shall not have such another opportunity for speaking about it. Do you think, Walter, Mrs. Clayton will really like you to go abroad?"

"Of course she will—she gave me her full permission long ago; and, besides, how proud she will be, if I come home with great wealth, or with the results of some important discovery."

"Yes, yes, I know all that; but don't you think, Walter, she would be happier still if you stayed at home with her? Think how lonely she will be while you are away. I feel sure your going will be a great trouble to her, though she may not say so, being unwilling to thwart your wishes; I hardly know whether I am right in saying so much as this, but I have had it on my mind a long while, and I do love Mrs. Clayton so dearly, that I think I cannot be wrong."

Walter was silent for some minutes, but at last he said, "Ruth, there seems no end to sad surprises to-day. After all, life really looks full of troubles. And, then, to give up the dream I have all along cherished, seems *too* much."

At this moment Rose entered with fresh relays of evergreens for the decorations, and the subject of their conversation was dropped.

During the remainder of his visit to Mr. Elliott's, Walter

found but little opportunity for renewing the subject, though it was evidently much on his mind. Once, only, when alone with Ruth for a few minutes, he had assured her that he had given the matter great consideration, but still had found it quite impossible to relinquish his cherished project, more especially as he had received such full and entire permission from his mother.

After the departure of the Claytons, the weather, which had hitherto been mild, became unusually severe, and Ruth appeared to suffer considerably from its effects. A London physician, who was summoned to give his opinion on the case, entirely coincided with her own medical man, in the belief, that a residence at some mild sea-side place was absolutely necessary for her during the remainder of the of the winter season.

Accordingly, a quiet pleasant home was secured on the south coast of Devonshire, and thither Mrs. Elliott accompanied Ruth, towards the close of the holidays.

Mr. Elliott, who was much detained in town by business of importance, was to run down as often as circumstances would permit. To poor Rose the separation was a real trial. When she knew that it was decided she must return to school alone, she wept bitterly, and declared that without her darling sister, it would be impossible to get on at all. Everything that could be thought of was done to cheer and soothe the little girl; and Ruth promised to write to her as often as possible, with full accounts of their new residence, and also to do her very best to get well again, that she might rejoin her at Manor House. Ruth was not one to forget her promises; and, once settled down in those pleasant

rooms, looking out upon the mighty ocean she loved so well, she began a steady correspondence, not only with her sister and Miss Wain, but also with Lucy Wright, for she felt a very great anxiety in regard to the eternal welfare of her kind friend.

For the first few weeks the mild sea breezes seemed to be exerting a most beneficial effect on Ruth's delicate frame, and she appeared perceptibly better. Her papa was delighted with the change, when he paid his first visit; and would willingly have persuaded himself that all danger was now past, had not his wife, with a keener perception of the truth, endeavoured to prevent his cherishing such fallacious hopes. Passionately fond of music himself, he had taken great pride in his daughter's recent progress; and now, seeing her look so much better, was anxious that she should resume her study of it, and mentioned the subject one evening to Mrs. Elliott, as they sat talking by the fire together, after Ruth had retired to her own room. He had been speaking of the probability of meeting with good masters in such a favourite locality, and the desirability of engaging one at once, when, looking up for a reply from his wife, he was almost vexed to see the sadness expressed on her countenance, and the large tears which were gathering in her eyes. "Forgive me," she said, making a great effort to speak, "I cannot bear to distress you, but indeed I feel as though *earthly* masters would be out of place here. Your words have brought to my mind a part of that beautiful poem of "Hiawatha," which, you know, is so great a favourite with Ruth. I was reading it to her this afternoon, and when I came to those touching lines about Chibiabos, I

could scarcely command my voice sufficiently to go on. I do indeed feel convinced that our darling girl is **very soon** going "a little nearer to the Master of all music."

Still, Mr. Elliott was not prepared to think so seriously of his child's state. He fancied that his wife's fears were aggravated by her great affection for Ruth; and, on the following morning, finding the patient still on the improve, he went out to make enquiries with regard to the best masters the town afforded. But his hopes were doomed to disappointment; he had met with a gentleman whom he thought fully qualified to instruct his daughter, and had fixed the day and hour for her first lesson, but before that time Ruth had become suddenly worse, and for some days was unable to leave her bed. She rallied again, however, but no further mention was made of the music-lessons, and, indeed, she seemed so entirely to have lost her little stock of strength as to be quite unequal to the slightest exertion. Very peaceful and happy, notwithstanding, she felt. She suffered no pain, and lay all day long on the wide, comfortable sofa, with Mrs. Elliott ever at her side, ready to read or talk, or sing or keep silence, as the wish of the moment dictated. And so the weeks wore on.



Chapter IX.

ROSE AT SCHOOL ALONE.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

ANY were the regrets expressed by the inmates of Manor House, when Rose, returning alone after the holidays, brought such a sad report of Ruth's health. Miss Wain was truly sorry, on her own account, for she had by this time found in the gentle girl the most congenial companion that the household afforded.

Lucy Wright, too, really regretted her absence, for, with all her wild, thoughtless ways, she was sincerely attached to her friend, and thoroughly respected her Christian way of life. For a few days, the intelligence of Ruth's illness, and the impression made by a letter which she received from her at the time, appeared quite to sober down the giddy girl; but again this feeling wore away, and though she had now entered on the new year, which she had promised her best friends was to witness her decision for Christ, she

seemed, more entirely than ever, bent upon pursuing the pleasures of the world.

One Wednesday evening, a lecture, specially intended for the benefit of the young, was to be delivered by their excellent clergyman in the church they usually attended, and Mrs. Morris had, of course, wished that all her pupils (with the exception of the very little ones) should be present on the occasion. Just as they were preparing to start, however, a slight shower of rain fell, and they were obliged to wait till this was over. "Well, if this were Sunday, I should be very vexed," remarked Lucy, "for then, if you are behind time, there are so many people to stare at you. But as it is only a week-day, and there will only be a few people in the church, I don't see that it matters if we do go in late."

"But, Lucy, dear," said Miss Wain, "the *Master* of the church is sure to be there."

"Oh, Mr. Rogers, you mean; yes, of course, he will be there."

"No, I did not mean Mr. Rogers; he is only the Master's *servant*."

"Well, really Miss Wain, you have a way of making everything serious, I declare." And Lucy turned away to talk with some companion more suited to her taste.

Poor girl, it seemed as though this half-year, everything was to go wrong with her. Feeling dissatisfied with herself (as indeed, how could she do otherwise?) she went about her various studies with even less alacrity than usual.

A new master had lately commenced attending the school, twice a week, for the purpose of teaching the use of the

globes ; and so intelligent and pleasant were his methods of instruction, that most of the girls looked forward to his lessons as one of their most agreeable duties. One day, when he thought those who formed his class sufficiently advanced to make the attempt, he left them with a problem to solve in connection with some of the constellations on the celestial globe, and told them, when leaving, that the next time he came he should be full of interest to learn who had mastered the difficulty for him. All the class were anxious to make the attempt, and the first who succeeded was Clara Arnold, for we have already seen she really was a clever girl, though sometimes disposed to indulge her wit, at the expense of kind feelings towards her neighbours. It was on Tuesday that Mr. Danson had given out the problem, and it was on the very next morning that Clara was able to announce her success to her companions. Urged on to further efforts by the knowledge that she had been able to work out the difficulty, and, unwilling to be behind her in giving satisfaction to their master, the whole class resolved that, if possible, they would accomplish the task likewise ; and all set to work, studying the problem, some with more, some with less diligence, according to their various dispositions.

Friday came, and as yet no one else had been able to vanquish the difficulty. When, however, the hour for Mr. Danson's coming was close at hand, Miss Davis, a girl of very ordinary abilities, but of marked application, entered the school-room with a face of supreme pleasure, and announced that she, too, was now ready to solve the problem to her master. Lucy Wright, whose natural mental

indolence had prevented her taking sufficient pains to reach the same result, though her faculties were fully equal to the task, now loudly lamented that others should be so much before her. "I was so hoping," she observed to Miss Smith, "that when I wrote next to mamma, I should be able to tell her that I had mastered this problem. But then it must be because it is really too difficult for me. I dare say Miss Davis is a genius."

"Yes," returned her teacher, unable to help smiling, "undoubtedly she is, according to the definition of it given by one of our very clever writers, which I was reading the other day. Perhaps you are not aware what genius really is, Miss Wright, so I will explain it to you. Carlyle defines it as the stupendous capacity for taking trouble. So, you see, that had you been willing to exercise your innate powers, you, too, would have been able to bring genius to bear on the case, and you might have been in the same happy position as Miss Davis."

Now Lucy, notwithstanding her generally good temper, was very averse to being laughed at, and on this occasion she deigned no answer to Miss Smith, but turned away, muttering discontentedly to herself. This habit of grumbling was something new to her, and it certainly was no improvement. Already her companions began to remark that she was not so sweet-tempered as she used to be, and some, even, were so ill-natured as to taunt her with saying that unless she altered her conduct, she would stand but little chance of the "amiability" this half-year. How true it is that for the most part the outside life affords a correct index to the inner feelings of a person. Poor Lucy, with

a heart at open rebellion against her Maker and Redeemer, might well seem cross and dissatisfied. Feeling, as she sometimes did, that her whole life was running counter to the Christian name she bore, and yet unwilling to cast away the worldly pleasures she still loved so fondly, was it any wonder that to her companions she seemed to have lost that sprightly gaiety and kind-hearted mirth which had made her such a favourite with them all? In the Bible God assures us, in one place, that there is *no* peace to the wicked; and in another, He promises that he will keep in *perfect* peace the mind that is stayed on Him, and were we to search into the circumstances of ten thousand individuals, we should not, in one single case, find this Divine order of things reversed.

But it is time now that we should be taking some little notice of our friend Rose, and her proceedings at school. When she first returned to Manor House, the fact of her being alone, and her having left Ruth behind ill, appeared thoroughly to have damped her lively flow of spirits, and for a time she went about her various duties, in a manner quite staid and demure. But by degrees this feeling wore off; association with her young companions brought fresh subjects to her thoughts, and a very cheerful letter, which she speedily received from Ruth, served to set her mind almost completely at rest. She was by no means the impatient, wilful Rose of a year ago; she was really trying, conscientiously, to control her hasty temper, and was already quite a favourite with most of the junior pupils. But her chosen and most intimate friend was little Mary Carter, whose sweetness of disposition made her, indeed, a

most desirable companion. Solomon the Wise, says, that a friend (meaning of course a true friend), loveth at all times; and Rose had certainly found this to be the case with Mary, who had preserved her affection for her, even when so unjustly accused, and so roughly treated. And Mary still had things to put up with in Rose's behaviour, for though the latter was sincerely and devotedly attached to her, and would, as a rule, make any sacrifice to gratify her, still she would at times exhibit such an impetuosity of conduct as almost to startle her gentle friend. This is not surprising; for when was it ever known that an impatient temper was curbed without long continued and patient efforts? Rose was, of course, very backward in her studies, for, during the time she had lived with nurse Brooks, her instruction had been on a very small scale; and the usual limit to her lessons had been the mere expression of a wish to leave them. Now, however, she was piqued at finding herself so much behind other girls of her own age, and she really worked hard to attain to something like their level. Nothing made her so angry as being laughed at for her ignorant mistakes. On one occasion, when she was puzzling herself to find out what European sovereign was first cousin to Queen Victoria, she had applied to Clara Arnold, and that young lady, without any intention of wilfully misleading her, had answered jokingly, "Oh, the king of the Cannibal Islands, I suppose." Poor Rose believed her in earnest, and gave the desired answer in all good faith; for a long time, the teasing she was subjected to in consequence, was a great trial of her patience.

Another time, when reading in English history an account

of Queen Elizabeth's annoyance at the conduct of her favourite, the Earl of Essex, she carelessly omitted the sound of the letter r in the sentence which says he was declared a *traitor*. Of this mistake, she thought she should never hear the last; the girls were always inquiring how her "Tater" flourished, and would pretend the extremest anxiety to learn if it were mealy.

But, perhaps, the following incident was one which vexed her more than any of her previous mistakes. She had just commenced learning French, and formed one of a class taught by Miss Smith, preparatory to the instructions of the Parisian master. They had learnt the letters of the alphabet, and were proceeding to read short syllables, when it came to Rose's turn to pronounce "ba." She looked at the letters thoughtfully, and was hesitating for a moment, when a little girl who sat next, hoping to assist her, whispered in her ear, "how does a sheep go?" Rose caught gratefully at the idea, and clearing her throat to give due effect, she made by no means a contemptible imitation of the cry of the animal she was desired to copy, for she uttered a very distinct "ba-a-a." To have refrained from laughing would have been purely impossible. The girls burst out in one loud chorus, and Miss Smith was fairly convulsed, but when she saw poor Rose's flushed and angry face, and the tears of vexation gathering in her eyes, she made a very great effort to control her entertainment, and insisted that the class should proceed steadily with its business. Every now and then, however, as the ludicrous syllable recurred to their memories, a suppressed titter might be heard here and there around the table. When Rose became sufficiently composed to think

quietly over the matter, it was a great relief to her mind to reflect that only quite the junior pupils had been present on the occasion; and as no mention of the subject was made during the after part of the day, she felt assured that the tidings of her mistake had not reached the ears of the elder girls, of whose criticisms she had a peculiar dread.

But in this she was mistaken, as she found out before long. The day had been a wet one, and the studies being concluded at an earlier hour than usual, the lessons for the next day had been learnt before tea, and the whole evening was free for recreation. One of the favourite winter pastimes at Manor House, was the asking of riddles, as they sat in a comfortable group assembled round the fire. It was seldom that they were able to produce any new ones from external sources; but this had been of little consequence, since Clara Arnold had introduced the fashion of making original ones, she, of course, producing ten times more than any of her companions. Very often they consisted of a play upon words, or the names of the pupils, and certainly, whatever might be wanting in ingenuity, was amply atoned for by the amount of merriment elicited from the guesses made in answer.

The first riddle on this occasion was propounded by one of the elder girls, "Which of our number is never wrong?" The little ones were thrown off the right scent at once, concluding that the word "number" must have some reference to the figures 1, 2, 3, and one timidly observed to her next neighbour that perhaps it was 7, for she had heard her papa say that 7 was the perfect number. Simple as the proposition seemed, many incorrect guesses were made; till

at last Miss Smith, who was one of the party, said, when it came to her turn, "Why, Lucy, I suppose, because she is always Wright (right)." This was, of course, the correct answer, and it now devolved on Miss Smith to propose one herself. "I see at this moment," she said, "what we all like very much, and yet not one of us would wish to touch. What can it be?"

Plenty of absurd things were suggested, till at length Miss Davis, who had been intently studying the subject with her usual praiseworthy concentration, announced, sententiously, that it must be the fire.

"But what is Clara about?" asked some of the girls. "Clara always guesses them so off-hand."

But it happened that just now Miss Clara was too intent on concocting a riddle of her own to pay any heed to those that were passing around her. After a few more turns she was ready, and gave the result of her cogitations in verse :

"What little word does the Frenchman call out,
If he falls into trouble, or gets put about?
What is the place where the barristers plead?
What oft' do we meet with, our course to impede?
And what is the cry of the innocent thing,
That wears wool on its back, and eats turnips in spring?"

The latter part of the riddle was, of course, sufficiently suggestive to allow of its being easily guessed, and besides the remembrance of Rose's mistake in the morning was still fresh in the minds of all, for, however the poor child might have hoped to the contrary, the fact was that the matter had spread throughout the whole school.

Scarcely had Clara uttered the last words of her riddle,

than a perfect chorus of "ba-a-a" ran round the circle. Rose, flushed with indignation, jumped up from her seat, and exclaiming, "It is shameful! It is shameful!" hurried from the room.

A few months ago she would, in all probability, have attempted to revenge herself on her tormentors, but she had by this time learnt, in great measure, to control her feelings. She was followed from the room by little Mary, who had been, as usual, sitting next her; and as they went together up the stairs, they encountered Mrs. Morris on her way to the school-room; for, having heard the sudden noise from her own little sitting-room, overhead, she had really felt alarmed lest something were the matter. She led Rose into her room, and having learnt the cause of her annoyance, tried every kind method to calm the child's excited feelings. Then, leaving her with Mary, she proceeded downstairs, and going into the school-room, spoke very seriously to her pupils on the wrong of seeking and making entertainment at the expense of others. She told them she felt sure they had acted from the impulse of the moment, and not as the result of intentional unkindness; but still she begged that, for the future, they would be more considerate, for, "Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart." When she rejoined the two children she found Rose quite composed and happy again, so she advised them both to return to their companions, and try to forget what had happened. They went downstairs at once, but lingered in the hall, scarcely liking to enter the school-room. They shivered for a minute or two, for it was a cold winter night, and then hearing loud shouts of laughter from within,

opened the door, under cover of the noise, and slipped quietly into their seats, only perceived by a few. They were in time to hear the closing riddles of the evening, one of which had just been propounded by Miss Smith, and was to this effect, "Which of the rooms in this house is used as a waggon-lodge?" Again all sorts of wrong guesses were made, and no one seemed to catch the right idea. Clara Arnold did not appear as bright as usual on this occasion, which perhaps was owing to her regret at having made Rose unhappy, for she was really far from being an ill-natured girl. "Do you all give it up?" asked Miss Smith. And being answered in the affirmative, she proceeded to explain that she meant the back room on the first floor, as that was the apartment in which Miss Wain slept. Even now, some of the little ones seemed mystified, until it was further made clear to them that "Wain" is an old-fashioned term for a waggon. This riddle not having been guessed, there arose some difficulty as to who should ask the next; but soon all agreed that the duty devolved on Miss Wain, as her name was so nearly concerned in the last, and more especially as she had not given one the whole evening. She willingly consented, and after a short pause, said, "My first is the beginning of a rainbow, my second is two-thirds of a potatoe, my third is as crooked as a ram's horn, and my fourth has a great deal to do with perseverance. My whole is a very sweet flower, beloved by us all."

"Then it must be 'Rose,'" said little Mary, after a few moments' thoughtful consideration, as she sat with her arms round her friend's neck. It was unanimously agreed

that it certainly was "Rose," and so many kind things were said to the young lady in question, and so many warm kisses she received from those who were most sorry for their thoughtlessness, that altogether, the unpleasantness of just now was forgotten ; and as Rose lay quietly in bed that night, she decided within herself that it was certainly a much happier thing to control one's temper than to give way to it.



Chapter X.

GOOD FRIDAY AGAIN.

"They shall look on Me, whom they have pierced, and mourn."

RUTH, meanwhile, was growing worse, and as it drew near the time for the Easter holidays she exhibited an intense desire to return to her home. She was much anticipating the pleasure of seeing Rose again ; and besides, it had long been her cherished wish that Lucy Wright should spend this short vacation with her, for she felt that in all probability this would be their last opportunity for earthly intercourse. Mrs. Elliott was of course desirous that, if possible, all her wishes should be gratified, and she herself saw no particular good in remaining longer at the sea-side. It was already April, and mild, spring weather. So the doctors were consulted, and gave an unanimous verdict in favour of yielding to Ruth's longing for home; for, indeed, their professional insight into her case made them fully aware that it little mattered in what locality her short remaining span of life was passed.

The dear girl was truly grateful to find that the desire

of her heart was to be accomplished ; and so earnestly she begged that no time might be lost, that preparations were at once commenced, and the journey was taken on the Tuesday previous to Good Friday. She bore the fatigue tolerably well, but not so the excitement of meeting her sister and friend, when they arrived on the following Thursday afternoon. They, on their part, felt deeply shocked at the altered appearance Ruth presented, and were sadly distressed to witness her pale face, and her entire want of strength. Having so looked forward to this meeting, their sorrow and disappointment were felt all the more keenly ; and after a very subdued evening, throughout which all parties made vain attempts to keep up their spirits, they retired early to rest.


Ruth, in consequence of the day's excitement, passed a very restless night, but towards morning fell into a quieter sleep. She was still dozing when it was time to prepare for church, so leaving her under the watchful care of a kind attendant, they all set out to attend the service. Rose had now far different ideas from those she had expressed last Good Friday ; she was gradually awakening to a true sense of what the stupendous transactions of that day had brought about—the sacrifice of a Saviour and the atonement for sin. She was too, to-day especially, impressed and subdued ; for not only was her darling sister evidently so very ill, but she had left her little friend Mary at school, suffering from a severe attack of croup.

When they returned home after church they found that Ruth had awoke shortly after their departure, and was now up and dressed in her usual invalid fashion for the day.

Their early dinner was quickly over, and then Mrs. Elliott and Rose came to sit with Ruth in the library, which, being on the same floor as her bedroom, was now always used by her during the day-time. When they entered she was lying on her favourite sofa near the window, apparently in a sort of stupor. She opened her eyes, however, when she heard their footsteps, and, greeting them with a loving smile, begged that they would stay and talk there; for though, as she said, she might feel too sleepy to hear all they said, yet the murmur of their voices was sweet and soothing to her. Of course her request was complied with, and Rose took her seat by the window, gazing out on the sweetness of the day. It was soft and mild, though not very bright, and the birds were singing in the trees of the shrubbery, which were now just bursting into tender leaf. "Mamma," said Rose at length, "I am rather glad it is not very bright to-day. It seems more suitable to our thoughts and feelings, and more like the first Good Friday, when you know it was quite dark for three hours, while our Saviour was on the cross. I don't know how it is; I suppose because I have not been very attentive to the matter, but I never clearly understood all the events of that day, and the time at which they happened. I wish you would tell me something about it."

"I shall be very pleased to do so," returned Mrs. Elliott, a thrill of thankfulness running through her heart at the evident interest Rose took in the subject, so different to the irksome dislike with which she had regarded it a year ago. "You know, of course, Rose, that it was as last evening, our Saviour partook of the Passover with His disciples, and

instituted the Holy Sacrament as a perpetual remembrance of His death, until His coming again. The Scriptures tell us that they then sang a hymn, very probably one of those Psalms which were especially used at the Feast of the Passover—I mean from the 114th to the 118th, inclusive. They then all repaired to the garden called Gethsemane, where Jesus used so often to go and pray; and on their way thither, we think it was, that He had with them that beautiful discourse, which we find in the 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of St. John, bidding them not to let their hearts be troubled, but to believe in Him, assuring them that He would prepare a home for them in heaven, and promising to send them the Comforter, who should always remain with them. When they had come into the Garden, Jesus left the other disciples, and taking with Him Peter, James, and John, desired them to watch while He was praying; but, as you have often read in the Gospels, their eyes were heavy and they fell fast asleep, while their Master endured for them such agony as made the drops of blood ooze from His skin. Just as He came to them for the third time, and still found them sleeping, Judas, with a band of soldiers came up to Him. They had brought with them lanterns and torches, though they needed no such light; for we know, in consequence of its being the time of the Passover, that the moon was near its full. Possibly their guilty consciences made them afraid to enter the Garden, with only that soft moonlight to reveal the deep shadows, cast by the low, dark olive trees growing around. They carried, also, swords and staves, as though earthly weapons could be of any avail against Him who is Lord both of men



and angels, and who, at one word, made their affrighted band fall backward to the earth."

"Oh yes, mamma, I remember all that quite well. And then, too, how Judas showed the soldiers which was Jesus, by going up and kissing Him. And then they led Him away, did they not?"

"Yes, dear, to the High Priest's house ; and though it was now far on in the night, it seems that Caiaphas and some of the other priests were waiting for His coming. You see they had so long watched to catch Him, and, moreover, had been all along so afraid of raising a tumult among the people when they did, that I dare say they were too anxious for the success of their scheme to be able to go to rest as usual. It seems, then, that our Saviour was brought before them ; and while they were insulting and falsely accusing Him of many things, Peter stood in an outer room, and three times distinctly denied any knowledge of the Master whom he had promised to follow, even unto death. The hours of the night wore on, and presently, when it grew towards morning, and the cock had commenced crowing, Jesus, turning from His wicked and presumptuous judges, cast that look on Peter which so forcibly brought his sin to his mind, that, as you know, he went out and wept bitterly. It must have been still quite early when the whole body of the chief priests and elders assembled in the council-chamber ; and after buffetting and smiting their Holy prisoner, declared that out of His own mouth He condemned Himself, and pronounced Him worthy of death."

"But then, mamma, I was wondering in church this

morning why they did not put Him to death at once, and why they delayed it by taking Him to Pilate."

"Because, dear, the Jews were now the subjects of the Romans, who had conquered their country, and they dared not inflict death on anyone without the consent of the Roman Governor. So to Pilate they hurried Him, St. John telling us it was 'still early.'"

"There was, indeed, no time to be lost; the rites and ceremonies connected with the great feast would soon be commencing, and it was highly desirable that their victim should be disposed of before there was likely to be any concourse of people in the streets. The priests themselves would not go into the judgment hall; the governor was a Gentile, and it would have been defilement to enter his dwelling, and would have prevented their eating of the Passover. Pilate, with Roman courtesy and politeness, came out to receive them, and leading Jesus into the judgment hall, asked him several questions, yet could, as he afterwards told His accusers, find no fault in Him. Still they would not consent to His being acquitted, and Pilate, happening to hear that He was of Galilee, thought to shift the responsibility off his own shoulders, by sending Him to Herod, the ruler of that province, who was himself then at Jerusalem. Besides, here, he thought, was a good opportunity for getting reconciled to one with whom he had been at enmity, by the flattery of requesting him to pass judgment on a prisoner.

"Herod was very pleased to see Jesus; he had heard a great deal about Him, and hoped that he should see Him perform some miracle. In fact, he had supposed Him to be

John the Baptist, risen from the dead. That our Saviour well knew his wicked craftiness, He had plainly shown His disciples, when He called him 'that fox;' and now, brought before him, and questioned in many words, He yet made not the slightest answer. This is the only one, of all His accusers, in whose presence Jesus maintained an entire silence. Herod, then, having mocked Him and set Him at nought, had Him arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back. Pilate was still unwilling to condemn an innocent person, and would fain have released Him from their hands; but the priests, knowing his weak point, urged upon him the consideration that if he did so, he would not be Cæsar's friend; and so, from motives of worldly policy, he allowed himself to be led astray, and gave the order for Jesus to be scourged, preparatory to His crucifixion.

"I may as well tell you that Pilate met before long with the retribution he merited. He fell into disgrace with the Roman Emperor, and being banished to France, died there in exile."

"Oh yes, mamma, I think I remember Miss Wain telling us this one Sunday afternoon, when we were talking about Pilate. And then she went on to say what a wonderful contrast it will be at the judgment day, when Jesus and Pilate will have changed places. And I thank you very much for explaining all this to me; but now I am not quite sure what time of the day we have come to in our story."

"St. Mark tells us in his account, that when they crucified Him, it was the third hour. As the Jews reckoned their day to begin at six o'clock in the morning, the *third*

hour, of course, corresponded with what we call nine o'clock a.m. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, all tell us that the darkness which overspread the earth lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour; that is, from noon till three o'clock in the afternoon, at which time our Saviour expired."

As Mrs. Elliott ceased speaking, Ruth opened her eyes, and smiling affectionately, assured them both that their company had been very agreeable to her, though she had been dozing part of the time. "And now," she added, "I begin to feel quite wide awake, and if I may only have my reviving draught, I believe I shall be able to take part in the conversation myself."

"It is exactly the time at which the doctor wished you to take it," replied Mrs. Elliott, "and Susan, as usual, takes care that you shall be punctual;" for at this moment the door opened, and in came Ruth's kind and attentive nurse, with the dose of medicine she always took at this hour, and which, acting like a stimulant upon her exhausted frame, seemed always wonderfully to revive her, and to make her, for a brief space, appear quite herself again.

The draught was eagerly swallowed, the pillows re-adjusted, and Ruth raised, so that she might see the pleasant view from the library window. "And, now, while I feel so fresh and wakeful, will you tell me about your sermon this morning? You can take it in turns, you know, and then neither of my preachers will be over-tired."

"Ah, Ruth," said Rose, "I am sure you would have liked to hear it. Mr. Wells made everything so plain and easy to be understood. I know I never used to think so, but then, I daresay it was because I did not pay much attention. The

text to-day was taken out of the 69th Psalm, and part of the 20th verse: "Reproach hath broken my heart." And the sermon was to show us, that the actual cause of our Saviour's death, was the breaking of His heart. You know, Ruth, about the soldiers piercing His side, and there coming out thence both blood and water; well, doctors say, that nothing but the actual fact of the heart being broken could have caused such a thing as that. I was quite surprised when Mr. Wells said so, for I had always thought it was only a fanciful way of speaking, and that nobody really died of a broken heart."

"Did you not, Rose? Well, I was aware that some persons do, though I believe the cases are rare. I suppose it must happen from great grief or over-excitement. I remember reading, in ancient history, of some old man, a Roman, I think, whose heart burst with joy, when he heard of some great victory his sons had gained. But, mamma, I do not understand this in reference to our Saviour; I always thought His death resulted from crucifixion."

"Well, dear, of course we can say so with truth, for it was on the cross He died. But I believe our good clergyman is quite right in thinking, that the *precise physical* cause of Christ's death was rupture of the heart. I will give you some of his reasons for this. In the first place, crucifixion, in itself, must have been a *lingering* death. The only wounds were those in the victim's hands and feet, by which He was nailed to the cross, and these communicated with no important blood vessels; moreover, the nails themselves served as plugs to these wounds, and thus prevented the loss of much blood. It is supposed, by ignorant individuals,

that the whole weight of the body was borne by these nails, but medical men have agreed, that had such been the case, the tension upon the upper muscles would have been so extreme that death would have resulted almost immediately. It appears to have been the invariable practice to provide the cross with a projecting piece of wood, on which the body of the sufferer rested. So you see, that as far as we have gone, there is nothing to account for our Saviour's death at so early a period as the expiration of six hours."

"No, indeed, mamma, for as you may remember it said in that interesting book, which we read at the sea-side, about Africa, that among those savage tribes, who still use crucifixion as a capital punishment, the victim always survives two or three days, and sometimes even lingers as long as four or five."

"Well, then, Mr. Wells went on to say, that as the prophecies concerning Jesus, in other parts of the Psalm, about the vinegar and the gall, &c., were literally fulfilled, it is not unreasonable for us to suppose that this prophecy also was meant in a literal sense. And lastly, he reminded us of the fact that our Saviour's death is always spoken of as a shedding of blood, and indeed, as the Scriptures assure us, '*without* shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.' Now, as we have been saying, crucifixion was by no means a death which caused the effusion of much blood ; but if we believe that by this text is actually meant our Saviour's broken heart, then we see the explanation of the words in their full force, His very heart's blood poured out for the sins of the world. And, as Mr. Wells said in concluding his sermon, is it possible to think of anything which

would give us a deeper idea of the guilt of sin than the fact that the weight of it borne by the holy and spotless Jesus, caused His heart to break?"

Mrs. Elliott ceased speaking, but Ruth did not reply; her thoughts were engrossed by the mighty topic of their conversation. After a few moments' silence, Rose left her seat by the window, and bending over Ruth, kissed her fondly, and told her that she would now go out into the shrubbery to find her a bunch of fresh violets.

As the door closed behind her sister, Ruth roused herself from her reverie, and asked Mrs. Elliott, as though suddenly recollecting a forgotten circumstance, where her friend Lucy was. "I declare, mamma, I have been so drowsy till just now, as almost to forget she was in the house. What has become of her? I have not seen her all day."

"She was evidently very much impressed with what our good clergyman said this morning," replied Mrs. Elliott, "and when we got home she went directly to her own room, begging me so earnestly not to let her be disturbed, that I would not even have her called to dinner. Susan carried some to her on a tray, and left it on the table outside her door, but I do not know whether she has taken it in. Under the circumstances, I thought it was perhaps the greatest kindness to yield to her wish and leave her alone."

"I think so too, mamma," said Ruth. "Oh, how thankful I shall be if her heart is touched at last with the sense of Christ's great love! Poor Lucy, I believe she has always thought religion a dull thing; but certainly when

she begins to see things in their right light, she will find out it is quite the contrary."

A few minutes of silence, and then Ruth continued, "Mamma, I cannot bear this suspense any longer. I cannot go upstairs to Lucy, for you know that exertion always sets my heart beating so violently, but I can just write her a note, and ask her if she will not come to me."

Paper and pencil Mrs. Elliott procured for the invalid; and when the note was ready, carried it herself upstairs, and brought the following in reply, written in a very tremulous hand: "Do not be unhappy about me, dearest Ruth; I cannot bear that you should grieve for anyone so worthless. At least, you will be glad to know that at last my proud heart is melted, and I am, like Peter, weeping bitterly for the past. Do pray for me—that is the greatest kindness you can do me; and when I feel able, I will come to you. At present I would rather be alone."

At Ruth's request Mrs. Elliott knelt beside her, and gave thanks that yet another soul was touched by the great love of the Saviour, and earnestly implored that in His own good time He would bind up the broken heart, and fill it with peace and gladness in believing, that so a life of faith might be commenced, and the Son of God be glorified. When Mrs. Elliott rose from her knees, she told Ruth that she must leave her for a short time, in order to go and make tea, but promised that she would remain with her then for the rest of the evening.

"No, indeed, mamma, I shall not think of allowing such a thing. I feel nearly well to-night, and it would only make me sorry if you did not go to church with the others.

You are not very long away, and I shall be very happy meanwhile, thinking over all we have talked about this afternoon."

Feeling assured that Ruth would be, as she said, really distressed if she stayed at home with her, Mrs. Elliott consented to go; and when she had seen her take some refreshment, and had comfortably settled her for the evening, with the fresh violets on a table near her, she started out in company with Mr. Elliott and Rose.

For a short time after their departure Ruth lay quietly listening to the chiming of the church bells, and enjoying the fragrance of her flowers. Presently, however, the door slowly opened, and Ruth, turning her head, saw Lucy enter with a face extremely pale. She cast on her such a look of anxious affection that Lucy felt quite overcome, and had to make a great effort to control her feelings, lest, by giving way to them, she might over-excite, and perhaps seriously injure, the friend she loved so much.

She silently advanced, and seating herself on a low stool by Ruth, eagerly seized her extended hand. "Oh, Ruth," she began, "how blind I have been. Never till to-day did I realize what the love of Jesus really is. Oh, I shall never cease to be thankful that I came here, and heard such a sermon as that which was preached this morning. Every word of it seemed spoken to me expressly. To think that my Saviour's heart should have been broken by my sins, my disobedience, my ingratitude, my wilfulness. Directly I came home from church I shut myself up in my own room, for I felt as if I could not bear to speak to anyone, and for a long time I could not believe that there could be

forgiveness for one so hardened as I have been. But I did try to pray, and at last it came into my mind that if Jesus was so full of compassion as to die for me, He surely will not let me perish. Now I see my own guilt and misery."

"No, indeed, Lucy, for is it not a faithful saying, and worthy of *all* acceptation, that Christ Jesus came to seek and to save the lost; and this is what you now feel yourself to be—utterly lost, but for the mercy of God."

"Yes, Ruth, I feel that I have not one single thing to recommend me in the sight of God. But what troubles me most of all is, that I am sure I am not half sorry enough for all the wickedness of which I have been guilty. I have led such a thoughtless, ungrateful life."

"Yes, Lucy, but then you must remember what the Bible says, that Jesus is exalted as a Prince and Saviour, to *give* repentance and remission of sins. You cannot, you see, even repent of yourself; you must seek the help of the Holy Spirit, who will bring all things to your remembrance, all the sins and wrong-doings of your life, and then will testify to you of Jesus as the Lamb of God, whose precious blood cleanseth from all sin."

"Ah, Ruth, that is a very comforting thought indeed. What a true friend you have always been to me. I can never love you enough. Little as you may have thought it, your life has been a perpetual reproach to me. Some of the girls told me what you said that first night of your coming to school; I mean, as to what was your definition of happiness—"Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and though I tried again and again to forget those words, or to shake off the impression they produced, I

never could succeed, and there were times when I felt utterly miserable. Now I see clearly how mistaken I have been, and how right you and Miss Wain both were in saying that nothing could make us really so happy as the friendship of Christ. Those worldly pleasures which I used so much to sigh for seem now not worth the mentioning."

"It reminds me, Lucy, of those beautiful verses :

"I thirst, but not as once I did,
The vain delights of earth to share ;
Thy wounds, Immanuel, all forbid,
That I should seek my pleasure there.

It was the sight of Thy dear Cross,
First weaned my soul from earthly things ;
And taught me to esteem as dross,
The mirth of fools, and pomp of kings."

But the effort of speaking so much made poor Ruth pant with exhaustion, and Lucy entreated her not to fatigue herself any more just then, lest it might cause her another sleepless night.

A long silence followed, and when Mrs. Elliott came in she found them still sitting in the same position, their hands clasped together, and the soft moonlight shining on their pale but peaceful faces.

Ruth begged that she might not retire to her room till after prayers to-night, as she felt quite equal to remaining ; so the servants were at once summoned to the drawing-room, with which the library communicated by folding doors, and whence Ruth, without having to change her position, could hear her father's deep, clear voice, as he led the evening devotions. She exercised her usual privilege

of choosing the hymn that was to be sung ; and Lucy, whose aching eyes made her wish to avoid the stronger light of the other room, remained by her side. Softened by the distance, and sung with the subdued feeling of the day, the words of the hymn fell softly and soothingly on Lucy's ear and heart, especially those of the second verse :

“ Sweet as home to pilgrims weary,
Light to newly-opened eyes ;
Or full streams in deserts dreary,
Is the rest the Cross supplies ;
All who taste it,
Shall to rest immortal rise.”

And, filled with a deep and heartfelt desire to live no longer to herself, but to Him who died and gave Himself for her, her whole heart and soul acquiesced in the mingled exhortation and encouragement of the last :

“ Take His easy yoke, and wear it,
Love will make obedience sweet ;
He will give you strength to bear it,
While He guides your willing feet
Safe to glory,
Where His ransomed captives meet.”



Chapter XI.

EASTER.

"Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept."

WHETHER it was the enjoyment of being once more in her own home, and in the society of her sister, or whether it was the heartfelt satisfaction she derived from a knowledge of the change so recently experienced by her friend, certain it is that from that day Ruth wonderfully revived, and to all but Mrs. Elliott, who was well aware of the deceitful nature of the disease, she appeared to be rapidly recovering. The stupor seemed to have entirely passed away, and she was now more lively and cheerful than she had ever been, even in her best days. The weather had set in bright and genial, and now the whole party would spend many hours each day out of doors—Ruth in her wheeled chair, and the others on foot. Sometimes they would wander through pleasant green lanes, whose banks were now quite gay with the many-flowered primrose,

sometimes ascend to the summit of a considerable hill, a little distance from home, for the purpose of enjoying the extensive view it commanded, and sometimes through the outskirts of a wood, on the further side of which ran a pretty little stream, the waters of which, swelled by the late heavy rains, rushed gaily along over the pebbles in its bed with a truly musical sound. But wherever they went the one thing most thought of, the object most dearly desired, was the pleasure and benefit of the beloved invalid. To her the choicest wild flowers were brought, with an eye to her gratification each walk was planned, and for her the two girls would hunt perseveringly to procure a few of her favourite white violets, or try to discover if there were not yet a cowslip in bloom, that she might inhale its sweet fragrance.

On the Tuesday afternoon, as they were returning from their ramble, and were just in sight of home, they saw the postman approaching from the opposite direction. Rose flew off at full speed to see what he might have for them, and in a few seconds was back again by Ruth's chair, holding out a letter to her. "The envelope has black edges, and besides, I know Miss Wain's writing ; but Ruth, the post-mark is Dartford, and I cannot understand that at all, for you know she was staying behind at Manor House to nurse poor Mary."

"Better wait to read your letter till we are indoors. Ruth dear," said Mrs. Elliott, interrupting. "There is rather a keen air blowing here, and you have already been out a longer time than usual."

So the cavalcade proceeded towards the house, which they

soon entered; and when Ruth had been divested of her out-door wraps, and was seated by the library fire, she commenced reading her letter. Standing by her side, Rose was perfectly overcome at the intelligence it gave—that little Mary had passed away from earth. She rushed from the room, and seeking her own little chamber, wept as though her heart would break. Lucy Wright, too, was deeply affected, and notwithstanding Mrs. Elliott's kind attempts at comfort, it was a long time before they were at all composed.

They were astonished to find Ruth so apparently unmoved, for they knew, that in common with the whole school, she had dearly loved the gentle child, and they concluded that it must be on account of her not having been with her lately, that she received the sad tidings so calmly, and without so much as shedding a tear. But we will explain to our readers what our two young friends were unable to realize. In spite of Ruth's temporary improvement, she was herself on the borders of another world. She knew it, and therefore the death of little Mary was no loss to her; she would rejoin her before any of the others. Moreover, the dying see things in a far different light to ourselves. The great realities of life and death are more real to them, and they recognize more clearly the great blessing of entering into rest :

“The less of this cold earth the more of heaven.”

In the course of the evening Mrs. Elliott read aloud to them the letter from Miss Wain, which was dated from Dartford, and had been written the previous day. Our

readers will perhaps like to hear its contents, as, no doubt, they have by this time become interested in its subject.

“MY DEAREST RUTH,—I feel so sadly unfit for writing, that I scarcely know whether I shall be able to indite an intelligible letter, but still must try to do my best, as I know you will be expecting to hear. You will, of course, have learnt from Lucy and Rose that our dear little Mary was suffering from croup when the school broke up for the Easter holidays, and that she was unable to be taken home, because a contagious fever had broken out among her brothers. Before the croup made its appearance it had been arranged that Mary should accompany the little Allett's, to spend the holidays with an aunt, who lived on the other side of London. She was much anticipating the pleasure, for all this quarter she and Susie had been great friends, and it was with evident disappointment that she heard the doctor's decision, when, two days before the school separated, he declared that it was absolutely necessary she should remain where she was.

“I felt so truly grieved to think of the dear child spending her holidays alone and in sickness, that I proposed to Mrs. Morris that I should remain and nurse her, little thinking of the better prospect in store for her. Mrs. Morris gladly accepted my offer, for of course her engagements were too numerous to permit of her giving much time to the invalid; and the housekeeper had promised to spend the vacation with a sister just returned from abroad. So I wrote to my cousins, whom I had intended to visit at Dartford, explaining the circumstances, and then installed myself as nurse in the little top room, which had been devoted to Mary since the commencement of her illness. She expressed her gratitude in her own quiet way, and gave me one of

those smiles which, you used to say, seemed to come from her heart.

“I could not help feeling sad (more on Mary’s account than my own) as I watched from the window the happy departures of her school-fellows. She herself, however, seemed quite calm and contented, and amused herself all Thursday morning with Pauline, showing her to the doctor when he paid his morning visit, and telling him that it had been the gift of a very dear friend. In the evening she became worse again and in spite of the prescribed remedies, tossed restlessly about all night. It will gratify you to know, dear Ruth, that nothing seemed to possess such a soothing influence over her as the little hymn-book you sent her after Christmas. Again and again, through that long wearisome night, she asked me to read or sing from its pages, nearly all of which were rubbed or worn from her frequent perusal of them. Oftenest of all, she asked for that one which ends :

“To my weak steps He doth give heed,
He watcheth me—my Saviour ;
He helpeth me in every need,
He loveth me—my Saviour.
He heareth, and doth answer send
To my poor prayer—my Saviour.
And He will keep unto the end,
The child that trusts his Saviour.

Jesus, dear Jesus, Thy name is sweet—my Saviour,
When shall I see Thee face to face, my wondrous, blessed Saviour?”

“At times, when for a short interval the poor child dozed quietly, my mind naturally reverted to that memorable night before the first Good Friday; and I felt glad that since it was my lot to be watching a sick bed, it should have occurred on a night, when in meditation and recol-

lection, I might hold fellowship with His sufferings who died to redeem the world.

“Towards morning Mary fell into a heavy stupor, from which she never again roused. The doctor told us plainly when he came that nothing more could be done, for that death had already set his seal on our dear little sufferer. The day passed away in almost perfect silence, varied only by occasional messages to her poor father, who came to the gate to hear tidings of his dying child. You may imagine how he longed to be with her himself; but so entirely disinterested and self-forgetting was he, that he refused to run the risk of endangering the health of the household by bringing infection into it, when he knew that his little daughter was so utterly unconscious as to be assured that his presence would be no benefit to her. I had not the heart to go to him myself, but always sent word by one of the servants. I was still sitting alone and silent when evening came on, and thoughts almost of discontent possessed me, when I compared the case of other children, well, and in their happy homes, with that of our little favourite, lying dangerously ill, with no relative near her. All at once, those beautiful words of Keble’s, about keeping our best till last, crossed my mind, and then I felt how I was measuring things by my own ideas instead of viewing them in the light of God. Then I realized, indeed, how far happier than that of any child on earth would be the Easter little Mary would spend in heaven. Filled with this new thought the remaining hours of the evening went rapidly by. It was about 10 o’clock when little Mary quietly passed away from us; and when just after, a servant came to tell me that her father was there again, I no longer hesitated to see him, but went downstairs at once, and across the garden

to the spot where I knew he was standing. He was leaning on the gate, his head bent so low that though he must have heard my footsteps, he could not see who approached him. I went straight up to him, and without a word of greeting, or any of the usual conventionalities, I told him at once the one thought that was filling my mind, to the exclusion of all others, "Little Mary will keep her Easter in heaven." Of course he was prepared for the worst; he had known that death was inevitable; but it made it none the easier to bear, now that the stroke had really come, and, as he afterwards told Mrs. Morris, the one worst bitter aspect of his grief, at the moment, was the reflection that never again would his little girl watch (as she was used to do when at home) some times by the hour together, for his return from the city, and then run eagerly for the pleasure of admitting him at the door. For a few minutes he was so silent that I began to imagine he must forget that I was still standing there at the gate; but he presently raised his head and said in a voice that strove to be calm, "and I ought to be thankful that she will." He then tried to thank me for having stayed behind to nurse her, and after that I left him, for, overcome with fatigue and anxiety, I was shivering from head to foot. I went to bed at once, trusting to a night's rest to restore me; but I found that sleep was an impossibility, and in the morning, urged by both the doctor and Mrs. Morris to seek a change of scene, I came down here to my good cousins, who received me none the less kindly, that my coming was unexpected. I am thankful to say that sleep has once more returned to me, and gradually (by the influence of this genial weather, and the cheerfulness of my relatives' society), my nerves are recovering their accustomed tone. Yet it still seems as

though the one thought of where little Mary is keeping her Easter, is the only one that my mind can thoroughly grasp. On Sunday morning, when I wrote, and heard the church bells ringing-in our Eastertide, the gladdest day of all the year, they seemed set to the burden of my thoughts. And the children in church seemed to be uttering the very same words, as they sang the Easter Hymn, till we came to that verse in which memory recurs to our Saviour's previous sufferings :

“ But the pains which He endured,
Our salvation have procured ;
Now above the sky He's King,
Where the angels ceaseless sing,
Hallelujah.”

“Then I almost fancied I could hear Mary's voice joining with the other children, and thought I saw her face lighting up, as of old, at the mention of our Saviour's name. She is indeed happy to be safely housed so soon; I feel that her sensitive nature would have felt the troubles of life more acutely than many. And after all, for ourselves, it seems scarcely worth while to grieve; yet a few more Easters, and we, too, shall join the song of those who stand around the Eternal Throne.

“And now, dearest Ruth, let me soon hear how you are,

“And believe me to be, as ever,
“Your very affectionate friend,

“C. WAIN.”

The intelligence conveyed by this letter of course cast an increasing gloom over our little party, and the remainder of the holidays passed quietly away. It was with sobered,

chastened feelings, that at their close, Rose and Lucy Wright bade farewell to Ruth, though, indeed, they could not bring themselves to believe that they would never see her again in this world. However, they had scarcely been back at Manor House a fortnight, when Rose received a letter, telling her that at last the end had come suddenly. This letter was enclosed in one to Mrs. Morris, who said all in her power to comfort the poor little girl, who declared that her troubles were now indeed more than she could bear, and that she was sure she should be always going wrong, now that she had neither Ruth nor Mary to keep her in check and help her to do right.

In the course of the day nurse Brooks arrived to take her home; and when she, in her old, fond way, tried to comfort her with assurances of what a good, affectionate sister she had been to Ruth, Rose wept more bitterly than ever, her loving disposition making her revert to occasions when she had spoken unkindly, and causing her to forget the more frequent instances, especially of late, in which she had indeed proved herself a sister worthy of Ruth.

On reaching home she of course found Mr. and Mrs. Elliott in deep distress, but when she discovered that even they were able to rejoice in the midst of their grief, and when they explained to her tenderly how great was the gain to Ruth, and how that they need not sorrow as those without hope, Rose began to grow more composed. She asked eagerly for all her sister had talked of since she had left her, and was so soothed and gratified by hearing the many kind messages and expressions of gratitude which Ruth had left for her, that Mrs. Elliott had to repeat them

to her again and again. But though quieted for a space, her grief would at times burst forth in all its violence, and then it seemed as if nothing could be found to check it.

On the afternoon of the funeral she had sobbed herself into a state of complete exhaustion ; and now, faint and pale, was sitting on a low stool by Mrs. Elliott, her head resting on her lap.

The silence, which had lasted some time, was at length broken by her papa, who asked his wife once again to repeat some verses, which had been a source of great comfort to him several times during the last few days. She steadied her voice as well as she was able, and then commenced some of those beautiful lines adapted to the burial service of the Church of England, concerning that saying of Christ, that He is the resurrection and the life :

“ Unchanged that voice ; and though not yet
The dead sit up and speak,
Answering its call ; we gladlier rest
Our darlings on earth’s quiet breast,
And our hearts feel they must not break.

Far better they should sleep awhile,
Within the Church’s shade,
Nor wake until new heaven, new earth,
Meet for their new immortal birth,
For their abiding place be made ;

Than wander back to life, and lean
On our frail love once more ;
’Tis sweet, as year by year we lose
Friends out of sight, in faith to muse,
How grows in Paradise our store.”

Touched to the quick by the exquisite beauty of the

verses, so well suited to their present sorrow, Mrs. Elliott paused, and for a little time all seemed wrapped in meditation of the subjects they embraced. At last Mrs. Clayton, who with her son had come a few days ago, to share and sympathise in the grief of her friends, leant forward and whispered that Rose had fallen fast asleep. Thankful that such a restorative should be exerting its influence on the poor child's exhausted frame, they gently transferred her to the sofa, where she remained for some time in a very peaceful slumber. Mr. Elliott carefully drew the curtain of a window near her, lest the bright beams of the setting sun, some of which contrived to find their way into the room, in spite of the closed venetians, should disturb her in her sleep; and then, having stooped to kiss her white cheek, he resumed his seat with a nearer approach to a smile on his face than it had worn for many days past. "It is always a good plan, I think," he said, "when we are in trouble, to remember how much worse our sorrows might have been. Our darling Ruth, though lost to us, is in far better hands, in that bright world where, by guardian angels led,

"Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead."

And then we have still left to us one dear child on earth; we are not so lonely as those who have lost their *only* one. It will still be our privilege to train up Rose to walk in the steps of her elder sister, and to teach her so to live that by-and-bye we may all be re-united, never again to be parted."

"Yes, indeed," said, Mrs. Elliott; "your words exactly

express my own feelings, and I trust they may lead us to the resolve contained in the last verse of the poem I was quoting just now :

“ Then cheerly to our work again,
With hearts new braced and set ;
To run, untired, love’s blessed race,
As meet for those who face to face,
Over the grave their Lord have met.”

Rose did not return to school that quarter ; it was feared the joint loss of her sister and friend would be there felt too keenly, and that it would be better to discontinue her studies for a time, until her spirits had somewhat recovered their natural tone. She accompanied Mrs. Clayton, when that lady returned, and spent a few weeks at her home, deriving great benefit from the change, and the kindness shown her by Mrs. Clayton and Walter.

After this she went with Mrs. Elliott on a visit to some relations in the north of England, where the bracing air had the best possible effect on her health, and brought back into her cheeks that bright colour which had so often made persons observe that she was rightly named “ Rose.” Once again she laughed and sang, finding enjoyment in all things, and in all people around her. Nor let our readers suppose that Ruth was forgotten ; far from that, the loss of her dear sister was always regretted, and the fact of her absence was felt like a sore spot in her heart. But she knew that Ruth was now unalterably happy ; and besides, she herself was striving to live as both she and little Mary had done, a life that God approves ; she was beginning to realize for herself Ruth’s definition of happiness, more than once before

mentioned—"Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

But it is necessary, before closing this chapter, that we should go back a little and speak of the transactions of one day, just before Rose left her home, in company with Mrs. Clayton. Mrs. Elliott had proposed that they should, according to Ruth's expressed wish, divide among her friends the little legacies she had left them. It was an interesting and affecting business. Never had the dear girl's thoughtful love for others been shown more plainly. No one was forgotten. Her relatives, her companions and teachers at school, and the servants, were all remembered in one way or other. For some few were letters, in which the writer earnestly besought those she addressed to lose no time in setting their faces heavenward.

Enclosed with a few kind words of leave-taking, was a copy of the last verses Ruth had written, and which she wished forwarded to Miss Wain. Our readers may feel sure that they were highly prized by the recipient, and we will here subjoin them for the perusal of those who have taken an interest in their writer:

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

"My life is fast closing, and death is at hand;
My spirit is nearing the Heavenly Land;
And my heart is exulting the call to receive,—
There is no condemnation to them who believe.

I am leaving the world, but its joys are as nought,
Its pleasures with sadness and suffering fraught;
When life is once ended, no more shall I grieve,—
There is no condemnation to them who believe.

I am leaving the friends I so fervently love,
But they soon will rejoin me in mansions above;
No sorrow for long can their spirits bereave,—
There is no condemnation to them who believe.

I am going to stand at the throne of my God,
But Jesus has washed me in life-giving blood;
No fear shall betray me, nor Satan deceive,—
There is no condemnation to them who believe.

My Judge is my Saviour, and Jesus my Lord,
He calls me to heaven, and heaven's reward;
The crown of salvation He bids me receive,—
There is no condemnation to them who believe."



Chapter XII.

FIVE YEARS LATER.

“He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will He pay him again.”

CARRYING our readers over a space of five years, we will once again look in on Manor House, and note the changes which have taken place in that interesting establishment. Miss Smith resigned her position as English teacher, on occasion of her marriage, some two years ago; and since that time Miss Wain has occupied the post thus left vacant, and for which she had amply qualified herself by a course of intelligent study, carried on during her hours of leisure. Clara Arnold has succeeded to her old office as instructor of the junior pupils, and though, of course, the younger girls are sorry to lose the tuition of their favourite Miss Wain, yet Clara is received with much more satisfaction than our readers would be likely to suppose from what they have previously heard of her. The fact is, that our old acquaintance is considerably improved. Great changes

have taken place in her fortune and prospects; and now, instead of being heiress to a handsome property, as she had always been led to expect, she finds that her father has engaged in unlucky speculations, that his means are in a very reduced condition, and that it is necessary for her to do something to support herself. Happily, adversity has had a beneficial effect upon her mind and heart; and while she retains her former cleverness and intellectual capacities, she employs them less frequently in making sarcastic remarks, and far oftener in devising little kindnesses for those among whom she lives.

With regard to Lucy Wright, we will just mention here that she has persevered in the Christian course we saw her commence. Her native kindness of heart, when strengthened and brightened by her earnest love for Christ, made her still more attractive to her companions, and she was followed by universal regrets when she finally left school some little time back. She is now the delight and stay of her widowed mother's heart, constantly devoting herself to her comfort and happiness, and shining as a bright light in the little circle of her friends and neighbours.

And now, it is but right that we should advert to our old friend Rose—but *little* Rose no longer. She has grown a fine tall girl, amply fulfilling the promise of five years back, both as regards the vigour of her bodily health, and the nobler qualities of the heart and soul. We do not say she is perfect: nay, if you asked her opinion of herself, she would tell you, with her characteristic candour, that she is a very long way off from that; yet, still, those who know and love her best, feel thankfully assured that in her life

they see the continual answer to that prayer, which, since her recent confirmation, she has so often put up, namely, that "God would so defend her by His heavenly grace, that she may continue His for ever, and daily increase in His Holy Spirit more and more, until she comes to His everlasting kingdom."

She is to leave school at the close of this half-year; for though her father would willingly have allowed her to remain until she was seventeen, yet, latterly his health has become so much enfeebled from his long course of labour in India, that he is almost entirely confined to his home, and feels the presence of his young and sprightly daughter as necessary to his happiness. She has made good use of her six years at Manor House, and is to employ some time daily in study when she is at home, besides having the advantage of one or two eminent masters. Her companions will miss her sadly, for she is a great favourite with them all; and being the pupil of longest standing in the house, is looked up to as an authority on many points, and is often made judge in little matters of dispute. Suppose we glance in upon the assembled group one leisure evening this half. The old game of asking and making riddles has somewhat gone out of fashion, and now the favourite pastime is one which Rose introduced at the suggestion of Mrs. Clayton. This is the manner of it. One young lady states that she has in her mind some eminent character, and that she will allow six questions (not too leading) to be asked concerning the matter. Whoever makes the correct guess as to the person intended, then has to propose one herself; but should the six questions have been asked, and still the

young ladies be unable to state who the party is, the original propounder must say who it was she had in her mind, and then select another.

On the present occasion Rose takes the lead ; and having desired silence, informs the company that she is thinking of a celebrated man, who lived 200 or 300 years ago, and who was imprisoned for stating a truth.

"Was it a religious truth?" asks one, as the first of the six questions.

"No, it had nothing to do with religion ; and yet it was thought to be in opposition to the Bible."

"Was the man a Roman Catholic?"

"He was; and yet the Pope was one of his most bitter enemies."

"That makes it very puzzling," remarked one of the younger girls.

"Please where did he live?"

"In the upper part of a lower extremity."

"Well, I don't see that that throws much light on the subject," said Susie Allett, who was by this time a tolerably well-informed girl. "What *shall* I ask for my turn? Oh, I know now, What was the man's profession or business?"

"Endeavouring to show people what they had never seen before, and trying to make them believe what they had always held false."

"He seems to have been a singular character," observed one of the elder girls. "Pray is it likely that if he were alive now, he would be imprisoned for the same offence?"

"No, for in that case, we might all of us expect to share his fate."

"I do believe I know who it is," exclaimed the sister of the former speaker. "Had he any personal defect, Rose?"

"Yes; through much study he became blind."

Thereupon a sudden light seemed to strike them all, and they shouted out with one voice, "It is certainly Galileo, the Astronomer."

The young lady, who had been the first to discover a clue to this individual, was now called on to propose one in her turn. After a short pause, and then a demand for attention, Miss Parker announced that the person whom she had in her mind's eye was an individual of warlike appearance, clothed in a complete suit of armour, and with a countenance of deep-settled resolution.

"I'll take care to ask a comprehensive question to begin with," said Rose. "Was this heroic personage a young middle-aged, or old man?"

"Neither."

There was a momentary silence after this decided but unsatisfactory answer, and then Rose's next neighbour said laughingly, "Well; your comprehensive question has not elicited much information, at all events. To my idea, it only makes the character more puzzling. Pray, Miss Parker, was your favoured individual an Englishman, or the hero of some foreign land?"

"Neither the one nor the other."

"Well, don't laugh at me again," said Rose to the last speaker, "for you see we are not much the wiser in consequence of your enquiries. I know what I would ask, if my turn were not past. Here, Katy, let me tell you what to say," she continued, turning to a little girl who sat near her,

and who came the next in succession. She whispered for a moment in her ear, and Katy repeated the question aloud. "Please tell us, Miss Parker, whether this person was successful in war?"

"Yes, my character gained some battles, relieved a besieged town, and thoroughly routed the enemy."

"Well, that at least was the work of flesh and blood," returned Clara Arnold; "and it is really quite a relief to my mind, for I began to think Miss Parker must be dealing in spirits. And what was the end of this successful and glorious career?"

"Disgrace and the stake."

"Oh, then, of course that opens my eyes pretty considerably," replied the ready-witted young lady. "Now I understand why your character was no man at all. The flames of the stake reveal to me none other than Joan of Arc."

And so the matter was settled, with only four of the allotted questions expended upon it; and now a fresh proposition was demanded of Clara, whose keen sense of the ridiculous generally provided her with something highly entertaining to her young companions. She now declared that she was tired of talking about *people*, and that for her part, she would make them guess a *place* instead. "I am thinking," she said, "of an island, whose name perpetuates the memory of a person mentioned in the Bible."

"I don't see how that can be difficult to guess, then," said one of the elder pupils. "We shall easily remember the names of Scripture characters likely to be used in geography."

However, we won't get puzzled as we were about Joan of Arc, so I'll ask at once, was it a man or woman?"

"A woman."

"Let's consider, then," said another, going thoughtfully over a good many of the female names mentioned in the Bible. There were Eve, Sarah, Rachel, Leah, Dinah, Miriam, and a heap more, but I cannot recall Eve Island, or Sarah Island, or any of the whole catalogue. Pray Clara, does her name occur in the Old or New Testament?"

"It does not occur in either."

"Well, I don't see, then, how a place could be named after her," observed Miss Wain, "unless, indeed, we derived our information from some other source. Is her name given in Josephus, or any other ancient history?"

"As far as I am aware, her name is not on record at all."

"Then I cannot understand how this Island perpetuates her memory."

"Nevertheless it does," returned Clara, laughing.

"Suppose we try how geography will help us," suggested the elder Miss Parker. "Let us try to remember any Island with a proper name to it. 'King George's.' No, that can't be it, for it is not a woman's name, and besides, King George was not a Scripture character. To be sure there are the Marianne. And now I come to think of it, one of the Herods had a wife, with some name of that sort. Have I guessed the right place, Clara?"

"No, you have not, indeed. I do not think Herod's wife is referred to in Scripture."

"Please, what ocean is it in?" asked one of the younger girls.

"In the Pacific. And now you have had five guesses, so mind what you are about, for if you don't find out with this one, you will all have to give it up."

"Well, what does the Bible say about her?" enquired one who was resolved to put a close question.

"Oh that would be telling. No, that is altogether too leading a question. You must think of a fairer one."

Again they put their wits to work ; but again unable to find any clue, they made some enquiry at random, and then gave it up.

"Why Lot's Wife, that is the place I mean. A small island about 155 degrees east longitude," Clara explained, much enjoying the joke of puzzling all these students in the halls of learning.

"I do remember now a little island of that name," said Miss Wain. "And of course, as you say, it does perpetuate her memory, though it does not mention her name. Well, Clara, you must give us another. There will be time for one more, and we should like to see if we cannot be sharper this time."

Our old friend thought for a minute, and then announced herself ready. "I will not this time," she said "carry you away in imagination over the boundless ocean, but will tell you, that you will find the spot I select within the borders of a large continent."

"A large continent!" repeated Rose. "Then it certainly is not in Europe. In which direction must we look, Clara, north, south, east or west?"

"Within the tropical regions."

"Will you tell us some of the advantages enjoyed by this spot?"

"With pleasure. It is of considerable size and importance, at no great distance from the coast, and it enjoys a healthy and temperate climate."

"A temperate climate in the tropical regions, well, I must say that sounds a contradiction in itself. Does it not, Miss Wain?"

"Well, I hardly know that Rose. You know distance from the equator is only *one* cause of an equable climate."

"Is it east or west longitude?" enquired Susie Allett.

"East," was the brief reply.

"And how about latitude?" asked the next in turn.

"It has no latitude at all."

"How stupid of me not to know at once that you were referring to Quito, in South America," said Miss Wain. I am sure that ought to be indelibly fixed on my memory. I recollect, when I was quite a little thing, I was once staying with an aunt in the country, who, during my visit, gave me a few lessons in geography. One day, when my uncle came in to dinner, I ran up to him and told him I knew all about latitude and longitude. 'Famous' he exclaimed, 'then please to tell me at once what town it is that has no latitude at all?' I was quite indignant with him, and felt sure he was only joking with me, until he produced the map, and showed me how places immediately on the equator, had of course, no latitude at all."

"But, Miss Wain," said Susie, "I thought all places by the equator were fearfully hot. How is it, then, that the climate of Quito is temperate?"

"Because, dear, it is built a considerable way up the sides of a mountain. Were it on the plain beneath, the heat would of course be extreme, but its elevation neutralizes the effect of its tropical position, and renders its climate quite agreeable."

Miss Wain was now called on to propound something on her own behalf; but she told them that her turn must be postponed to a future occasion, for that it was now quite time that they took their places for prayers. Thus terminated the proceedings of the evening in question.

About this time the young ladies of Manor House were all feeling a great interest in the affairs of a young servant-girl, who had been temporarily employed in the establishment. She was an orphan, and the sister of Mrs. Morris's housemaid. Her health had been very delicate; and even now, though somewhat improved, the doctor considered that a residence in warmer climes would be very desirable for her. Through Mrs. Morris's kindness she had been recommended to the wife of a clergyman about to proceed to a Church in Australia. They had but one child, a little girl, seven years of age; and it was for her they required an attendant. It was exactly the thing to suit Jane, Mrs. Morris thought. The work would be light, her master and mistress kind and good, and a sea voyage the most likely means to establish her health. The only difficulty that remained was the outfit. Mrs. Morris would do what she could, but she had many claims on her purse, and lately had sustained some rather heavy losses.

When Rose became aware how the matter stood, a plan very speedily occurred to her mind, but she deferred to

mention it until it was more matured in her own brain. By this, our readers will see that Rose is no longer so impetuous as of old, but has acquired a great lesson in the art of self-control.

The next day, after further consideration, she ventured to propose her scheme to her kind governess. It was to this effect, that a subscription should be raised in the school to defray the expenses of Jane's outfit; and that, as the time was short, a working party of the young ladies should be held twice a week, in order to help make the various articles of clothing.

Mrs. Morris was naturally very pleased with this kind suggestion, and gave her full consent, only stipulating that it should be put to the vote, that none might engage in the work unwillingly, or suppose that it was done at her desire. Not one dissentient voice was raised, which we must certainly say speaks well for the charitable feelings of the school; and a very handsome collection was made on the spot, with promises of further help during the two or three weeks that yet remained before their *protégée* would sail.

Rose, who wished to have all things in due form, proceeded to nominate a committee for the purchase of the materials and the superintendence of the work; and she herself was unanimously elected secretary and president in one, both in right of her long standing as a pupil at Manor House, and also as the originator of the business in hand.

She was able, also, to contribute a generous share of the funds, for she had long ago reformed her shiftless and uncomfortable habit of always spending whatever she had in hand, and had anyone reminded her of her old fondness

for referring to nurse Brooks' indulgence in the matter of debts, she would have laughed heartily at the recollection. Now she managed so well, that she was able to give a liberal donation towards this good cause, without entrenching on a little sum of money she had laid by for the purchase of a new dressing-case. Be it known to all concerned, that our friend Rose was a neat and lady-like girl in her ways, and not a little particular as to the appearance of things about her. So, lately, she had become rather scandalized at the battered sides of her old tin dressing-box, which having been provided for her when she first came to school, and having travelled backwards and forwards a good many times, was now certainly looking considerably the worse for wear, and she had resolved, when in possession of sufficient funds, to replace it by a very pretty little rosewood case, which she had seen in a neighbouring fancy shop.

But to return to Jane and her outfit. Rose, with the assistance of the committee, made out a list of everything that was thought would prove necessary, calculated the expenditure as nearly as possible, and with much consultation, and great anxiety as to how to decide for the best, purchased the materials.

On the occasion of the first working meeting, nearly the whole time was taken up in cutting out and fixing; and I may remark, in passing, that the most troublesome part of the whole business was preparing the work for the younger and less skilful pupils; in fact, I have been told, that more than once, the leading members regretted their responsible position, and inwardly resolved that, for the future, nothing

should induce them to be on a committee. We will hope, however, that time will cause them to rescind this resolution; and that hereafter, they will all take active parts in schemes even more difficult of management than the one in question. Poor Rose, who, as we hinted before, had not yet arrived at perfection, found her temper sorely tried by the long stitches and various discrepancies of the juvenile workers. Susie Allett had volunteered the making of a flannel petticoat, but so sadly puckered the band in putting it on, that Rose was very much vexed, and for a moment thought of declining her future help altogether. But she, happily, now-a-days, did not speak without thinking, and after a short consideration, she undertook to re-adjust the band herself, and gave Susie some handkerchiefs to hem instead. Rose, having rather a taste for millinery, herself contrived the trimming of the bonnets, and at length (the money being all spent) it was decided that Jane's wardrobe was now complete.

That night, however, Rose lay awake, anxiously pondering over the list of articles which she herself had made out, and which she fondly hoped had provided for everything. But, poor girl, just as she was racking her mind to recall whether it were possible that anything could have been overlooked, it suddenly occurred to her that no one had ever thought of boots, things most indispensable when preparing for a long voyage, because of the impossibility of obtaining a further supply on board ship. What was to be done? Rose asked herself again and again. The boots must be had, but how? She knew that the late subscription had exhausted the funds of most of her companions, and that

the very last penny raised had been expended. How foolish to have forgotten such necessary articles, she thought ; and yet not altogether surprising, for it was the first time that Rose had ever had to make out a list of things for a sea-voyage, and we all know how we gain by the teachings of experience. Besides, her mind had naturally dwelt most upon those things which would require *making*, and this would in a great measure account for the boots being forgotten. Still, think as she would, the omission remained the same, and the question now was, how could it be repaired.

For her own part, she had subscribed the whole of her available funds, with the exception of the 18s. laid by for the new dressing-case. That, of course, she might devote to the matter ; it would be just sufficient to purchase two pairs of boots ; but then, what a length of time would elapse before she could again spare the same sum of money for this desired object, and meanwhile she would have to continue using the old battered tin box. Of course she could apply to Mrs. Morris ; but she generously scorned that idea, for she knew her governess to have stated that she had already given all she could afford ; and besides, Rose did not like to trouble her about a matter of which she had so particularly begged to be allowed the entire management.

She fell asleep, with the question still undecided ; and, while dressing next morning, had almost come to the conclusion that it would be too great a sacrifice to give up the purchase of the new case. Happily, however, the Bible reading that morning embraced a statement which had the

effect of entirely altering her resolve. It came to her turn to read the verse in which it says that even Christ pleased not Himself. Tears of self-reproach sprang to her eyes at the remembrance of how unwilling she had been to follow His footsteps in that respect; and she took the earliest opportunity of laying out the cherished sum in the purchase of two stout pairs of boots, for the completion of Jane's outfit.

It happened that her self-sacrifice was known only to Miss Wain, who had undertaken to procure the dressing-case for her the next time she went out shopping, which she frequently did, on behalf of the school; and Rose was glad that her companions should be in ignorance of the matter; for, with the humility of true generosity, she did not wish her good deeds to be talked about.

Jane, full of gratitude for the kindness that had been shown her, and with many promises of writing as soon as she should have reached Australia, sailed early in November.

When the excitement and busy interest occasioned by her departure had somewhat subsided, the young ladies of Manor House began to turn their attention to the various duties, and subjects of interest, which are always inseparable from the closing weeks of a half-year at school. Each one is certain to have something to finish, either map, or drawing, or work, while many devote themselves with special earnestness to some particular branch of study, hoping to carry off a prize for the same.

To Rose this was indeed a busy season, for she was completing her last half-year, and was to leave Manor House at the approaching holidays. There were many things she

had in hand, but where help could avail, it was freely given, for so much beloved was she that all were delighted to assist her, and scarcely a day passed in which she did not receive some assurance of affection, or expression of sorrow that she was so soon to leave.

Our readers will suppose that it was with much gratification she received an invitation (about a week previous to the separation of the school) to be present at a meeting of her teachers and school-fellows, to be held on the occasion of her approaching departure, in order that she might be made duly sensible of the regret they felt in parting with her.

The evening came, and all passed off well; speeches were made, and a very kind and affectionate answer expressed in return. At the close of the meeting, and just before the party adjourned to the supper prepared to do honour to the occasion, Mrs. Morris stepped forward, and said that she had been requested to speak on behalf of the whole school, both teachers and pupils; and to present to Rose, as their united offering of friendship, what they trusted might prove very serviceable to her. She then placed a large parcel on the table, and having removed the wrappers of paper with which it was surrounded, handed to Rose a most elegant and well-fitted dressing-case. It was of rosewood, lined with blue velvet, and the stoppers of the various glasses were of silver plate. In fact, as Rose saw at a glance, it was three times as handsome as the one she had wished to possess a few weeks ago. But to say nothing of the intrinsic value of the present, how delightful it was to find that her companions and teachers loved her so well, as to contribute so handsomely, and plan so skilfully, to give her this pleasant

surprise. As to the choice of the case, she well knew she must be indebted for that to the thoughtful kindness of Miss Wain.

Altogether, Rose felt quite overcome, and could make but a very stammering attempt at her acknowledgment of their affection; still it would appear that it mattered little what she said, for her words were almost drowned in the applauding exclamations of her companions—and, smothered with kisses, she was led away to the dining-room, to occupy the post of honour at the supper-table.

Full of the pleasant excitement of the evening, it was late that night before she could compose herself sufficiently to sleep; and, naturally, her mind reverted to that recent occasion, when thoughts far less agreeable had kept her waking. "How true were those remarks I was reading last Sunday," she said to herself, "about the certainty of God bringing to pass, all He has promised, whatever we may think about it. And quite true, too, that He often does it literally. To-night was a case in point. I gave up something to please Him, and He has put it into the hearts of all the people here to give me something three times as good." And as Rose, quite tired out, at length fell fast asleep, some one seemed to be whispering in her ear, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again."



Chapter XIII.

A WEDDING.

"There are many devices in a man's heart ; but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand."

WE must ask our readers again to pass over a few years, and then to seek for Rose in the circle of her own home. She has indeed proved its joy and comfort ever since she left school. She has been her father's almost constant companion, walking out with him and reading daily to him ; for long service in hot climates has much impaired his health, and rendered him prematurely old. Moreover, he has almost entirely lost his sight, and would have to remain very ignorant on his favourite topics in the newspaper, were it not for Rose's clear, steady way of reading them to him. Every morning she goes through some of the leaders of the "Times", with whatever else he may wish to hear. And not only is this duty always performed, but performed cheerfully—for though Rose has no personal liking to the newspaper, and occasionally feels

rather vexed when the boy arrives with it, just as she is busy about something else, yet it is but just to her to say, that this feeling of vexation is at once checked, and that she goes off so pleasantly to the business, that her father has scarcely ever a suspicion that she would rather be doing something else.

Mr. Elliott takes a deep interest in politics, and has tried to make his daughter do the same; but in this he has not been quite successful, for though Rose listens to all his explanations, and really tries to understand the characteristics of the different leaders of government, she has hitherto found it quite impossible to feel any real concern as to whether the Liberal or Conservative party are in the ascendant. One day, as she was reading aloud some of the debates in the House, she came to a statement which sounded very like a contradiction of something the speaker had previously said. Mr. Elliott, who was listening with his usual intentness, instantly observed it, and thought Rose had done so too, for she hurried to the close of the sentence, and then paused to speak. She began in an animated voice, but instead of denouncing, as her father had expected she would, the contradictory nature of the speech she was reading (with, however, a mind quite pre-occupied), she turned to Mrs. Elliott, who was sitting by the fire, and exclaimed, "Oh, mamma, I have just thought of what will be the prettiest way for me to trim your straw bonnet."

Mr. Elliott could not restrain a hearty fit of laughter at this, and when his mirth had at length subsided, he told Rose he now despaired of ever making her conversant with the art of government. "I suppose," he added, "it is

rather unreasonable of me to expect you to be everything; and, since you are such a good and dutiful daughter, I must look over the circumstance of your not being an ardent politician. At all events, I will not resume my lessons with you on the subject, until the debates in the House turn upon the question of how to trim straw bonnets."

To Mrs. Elliott, likewise, Rose was a great help and comfort; for not only, as we have seen, did she take a very lively interest in her millinery arrangements, but she also assisted her in the superintendence of household duties, for which her failing health often made Mrs. Elliott feel quite unfit. Accounts of all sorts were brought to Rose, and she undertook the keeping of the book in which all the household expenses were entered.


But though her principal and most numerous duties lay at home, she had yet a few in the circle of her poorer neighbours. There were one or two families whom she visited and assisted, though of course her father's large claims upon her time and attention, and the fact of her being an only child, made it quite impossible that she should extend her sphere of action in the way of district visiting. She had, too, a class of girls in the Sunday school, and very carefully was the subject of each lesson studied, that it might be presented in an intelligent and pleasant manner to the minds of those she taught.

Rose's principal endowment was a very fine voice; and at the particular request of their clergyman, Mr. Wells, who was very anxious to improve the singing in the church, her father had allowed her to form a little choir of those village

children who appeared to have any aptitude for singing, and to give them some instruction in the art, once a week, at the national school-room. A distant relative of the Elliotts, and one, indeed, who was almost a stranger to them, had accompanied Rose on one of these occasions, while staying at her father's house. As they were returning, this young lady expressed her surprise to Rose that she should take such pains with a few rough country children, adding, "it is quite a waste of your fine voice, Rose. If I were you, I should give up this, and employ the time in practising some of those magnificent Italian songs which they so often have at the opera."

"Excuse me, dear," said Rose simply, "but I cannot think teaching my little choir at all a waste of time. Everybody acknowledges that the singing in church has been much better since I undertook to train them, and surely it is a great privilege to be able to do anything in assisting to make the service more beautiful and attractive. I was reading something the other day, in a book papa is very fond of, which struck me very much; it was to this effect, that greatness of mind does not consist in doing great things, so much as in doing little things with a great mind."

One forenoon, Mr. Elliott was sitting alone in his study, his wife and daughter having both gone out to walk. He heard a knock and ring at the front door; and presently, Walter Clayton, now a tall, handsome young man, of four or five-and-twenty, was announced. Mr. Elliott rose with unfeigned pleasure to greet his young friend, for Walter had ever been a favourite with him, and it was some time since he had paid him a visit. A few ordinary topics of



conversation were entered upon, but it was evident that something of unusual importance was in the young man's mind; and presently, with very little circumlocution or preface, he gave vent to the wishes that were filling his heart, and earnestly besought Mr. Elliott to give his consent for Rose to become his wife, assuring him of the deep affection he had for years felt for her.

"It is out of the question, altogether out of the question, my dear boy," replied Mr. Elliott. I am truly sorry that such a thought should ever have entered your mind. But you cannot, in reason, expect me to yield to your request. Remember that Rose is the only one left us, and how could we dream of uniting her to one who has set his heart upon schemes of foreign adventure and enterprise? Such a marriage could never meet with my approval. For on the one hand, I could scarcely expect that you would be willing to leave her in England while you went on your travels, and I should never cease to be miserable if I allowed her to accompany you to foreign lands, and very possibly into scenes of peril."

"And is that then, Sir, your only objection to my suit? If you can tell me that, you will relieve my mind of a great weight, for I can at once explain to you that that objection no longer exists. I have come to the fixed determination of remaining at home altogether. In short, Sir, I am about to enter the Church. The course of collegiate study, which by my father's will I was enjoined to go through, is now completed; and as, during the latter part of my residence at Cambridge, my studies have been purely theological, I have already passed the preliminary examination for holy

orders, and expect to be ordained at Canterbury in the course of a few weeks."

"But really, Walter, you surprise me. What has brought this sudden change in your plans?"

"Indeed, Sir, I have long had the subject on my thoughts, but was unwilling to mention it till my mind was fully made up. Years ago, Sir, it was brought home to me, that the carrying out of my plan of foreign travels would be selfish conduct towards my mother, who loves me so fondly, and who would be so lonely without me. You will like to know that it was Ruth who, only a short time before her death, pointed out to me the wrong of the course I was wishing to adopt. I tried to persuade myself then, and many times since, against the assurances of my own conscience, and it was only lately, when my mother had that severe attack of illness, that I was enabled thoroughly to make up my mind to relinquish all my cherished schemes. It was then I realized the miseries I should feel if she should again suffer, and perhaps even die, while I was away from her, and I discovered that what Ruth had shown me to be my duty, would really tend to my own comfort and happiness, as indeed is often the case."

For a few moments Mr. Elliott was silent; the mention of his still dearly-loved and fondly-remembered daughter sent a thrill of emotion through his whole frame; nevertheless, it was one of thankfulness to find yet another instance of the good wrought by the influence she had exerted while on earth.

He rose presently, and coming to Walter's side, laid his hand kindly on his shoulder and said, "Ah! my boy, it was

ever Ruth's aim to show people the right; sincere herself, she did all she could to make others the same. And now that you have put such a different face on the matter, I suppose I can no longer say you nay, though it will be hard work, both for Mrs. Elliott and myself, to part with Rose."

"But I think," replied Walter, his face now beaming with delight, "that what I have to tell you, with regard to the remainder of my plans, will perhaps help to reconcile you to our marriage. Mr. Wells, your excellent clergyman, is in want of a curate. Increasing infirmities, he says, prevent his carrying out all his schemes of parochial improvement, and he must have assistance. I happened to hear of it at college, through a friend, and I wrote at once to Mr. Wells, begging him to consider that I had an extra claim for his notice, on account of his old friendship for my father. The result of it is that he has promised to appoint me his curate, and has already engaged a gentleman for a few months, that is, until about Midsummer, when I hope to enter on the duty myself."

This explanation of affairs, as Walter had imagined it would, certainly did produce a more favourable effect on Mr. Elliott's mind, and a cheerful conversation was kept up between them, until Mrs. Elliott and Rose returned from their walk.

We pass over the meeting and further explanations which ensued, leaving our young readers to infer, what was indeed the case, that Rose's willingness to become his wife had been previously ascertained by Walter.

That evening the happy little party sat by the fire,



Chapter XXV.

CONCLUSION.

" Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good."

IT is often a complaint laid against a story that it ends too abruptly, and quits the reader just when (all things having reached some desirable crisis) the parties concerned in the tale have been made exceedingly happy. On the present occasion, therefore, we are resolved not to expose ourselves to this complaint, by closing our little history with the marriage of Walter and Rose ; but, running the risk of neglecting to end at what might be termed the most dramatic point of interest, we intend to give our readers one final glimpse of our old friends, before bidding them a last and friendly adieu.

Mr. Wells was not disappointed in his curate. He found him ever devoted and earnest in his work ; the old enthusiasm for more secular pursuits thoroughly transferred to the fulfilment of the duties of his high and holy calling.

His truly Christian conduct made him deeply respected by all classes in his parish, while his cheerful disposition and frank, pleasant manners, rendered him especially a favourite with the lower orders.

He thought nothing beneath him, if it might tend to increase the confidence and affection between him and his parishioners. Every household was visited once in the course of each month. One day, when finding a poor woman in her cottage garden, sadly distressed at the breaking of part of her clothes line, by means of which a whole row of linen was trailing on the ground, he did not disdain to offer his willing assistance, and quickly procuring from a neighbouring shop a more serviceable piece of rope, he soon repaired the broken line, and left it in a more effective condition than at first.

As he was leaving the poor woman, quite overpowered by her thanks, he encountered Mrs. Elliott, who, unperceived by him, had been watching his performances, as she stood waiting for him at the little garden gate. She laughed heartily, and told him, as they walked together up the village street, that this was a regular specimen of knight-errantry, and quite in accordance with his old ideas on the subject. "And I am sure you are quite in the right, Walter," she added more gravely. "No one need suppose that you degrade yourself by these kindly, though familiar actions. The people, I understand, think you a thorough gentleman. I found out one good effect of your gallantry, only the other day. You know how poor old Mrs. Ross refused at first to come to your Bible reading for old people, on Tuesday afternoons. I called to invite her, as you asked me to do,

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but she seemed to be in one of her crossdest moods, and in fact, was positively rude. In vain I assured her that your only aim in proposing these Bible readings was the benefit and advantage of the old, and that on that account you had selected the afternoon as the most suitable time; she would listen to no reason at all, and declared that you only called the poor people together because you thought yourself a fine scholar, and loved to hear yourself talk."

"But she has been with us at the last two readings," replied Walter, "and I was intending to ask you if you knew the cause, as I felt sure you said at first she refused to come."

"Yes, that is just what I wanted to tell you about. She was coming down the street that Tuesday afternoon, when Dame Bassett had been taken so faint in the meeting, and she was just in time to see you lead the poor old thing into her almshouse. A few days after that, she came up to my house to speak to me, and then it was she told me, with tears in her eyes, what an effect your conduct had had upon her mind. 'I shall never forgive myself,' she said, 'for saying he was proud and lofty. To see him help that poor old dame—born gentleman, as he is—just as tenderly as if she had been his own mother. And the next day, when, just as I was having a cup of tea, he happened to call in upon me, I felt quite ashamed like, and flustered; but he was just as usual, and said he felt so warm and tired, that, if I had no objection, he would take a cup with me. I'll never call him proud again; and, as to the Bible meeting, not rain nor storm shall keep me from being there, as long as I have a leg to go upon.' So you see, Walter, your

knight-errantry fulfils its own design. You know how far I am from wishing to flatter you, but I think it only right to let you know of your success, being sure that you acknowledge the true source of it all. And I could not help thinking of this little incident when you were preaching on Sunday afternoon, and realizing what an interesting illustration it was, to the words of your text, 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with Him.'"

But while we are speaking so much of Walter, and his popularity, it must not be supposed that Rose holds a mean place in the people's regard. She, too, is a general favourite, and willingly devotes all her leisure time, in seconding her husband's benevolent efforts. She takes quite an active superintendence of the schools; and without at all neglecting the claims of her own family, has appointed a village mothers' meeting, at which she and Mrs. Elliott preside alternately.

It was just eight years after her marriage that Rose wrote as follows, to our old acquaintance, Miss Wain :

"MY DEAR FRIEND—My various engagements leave me so little leisure for the claims of correspondence, that I am well aware it is indeed a long time since I sent you anything like a letter. Lately I was recalling my delinquencies, and was deliberating as to what address would be most likely to find you, when I heard accidentally from a lady, who is staying at the Rectory, that you were about to leave your present situation, and were in search of a new one. Nothing could be more opportune, for my husband and

myself had come to the conclusion that it will be a good plan for us to have a governess at once. I need not say that there is no one whom we should so heartily welcome under our roof, in that capacity, as yourself; and Walter and I both sincerely hope that nothing may occur to prevent your falling in with this arrangement. You know we shall do all we can to make you happy, and as the children are so young, the hours of study will of course be short. Our dear little Ruth is now just seven, and the very counterpart of her namesake, my own darling sister, with the very desirable exception that she seems to have a much stronger constitution. I have been teaching her myself a little lately, but I find it impossible to continue, her younger sister and my twin boys taking up so much of my time and attention. I have, in addition, my household and parish business to look after, so that you will see I have fairly no time at all left for teaching my children. As to the studies Ruth shall enter upon, we can settle all that when you come (which I hope you will arrange to do as soon as convenient to yourself); but of our chief and highest aim in her education, I am quite sure I need not write to you. You well know how much we wish to see her, what her namesake was—a Christian indeed. I will not write further of our household, trusting that you will soon make the personal acquaintance of each and all. Papa and mamma desired me to convey to you their kindest remembrances; the latter is much as usual, but poor papa is now totally blind. He is, however, quite cheerful, and seems much to enjoy the society of his grandchildren; Ruth, as you may suppose, is his especial favourite, so much does she remind him, in

her gentle ways, of his own loved daughter. The voice, he says, is the very same. Scarcely a day elapses without an interchange of visits between some members of the two families."

At this point Rose brought her letter to a conclusion, and here also we, profiting by her examples, will close our little history, only lingering for a moment to satisfy our young readers on two points—first, that Miss Wain did accede to Rose's proposition, and did become her children's governess ; and, secondly, that little Ruth amply fulfilled her parents' fond wishes, and grew up, what her namesake before her had been—a Christian indeed.





